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Number 13

High School Prose Book

PART I

EDITED WITH NOTES BY

O. J. STEVENSON, M.A., D.PÆD

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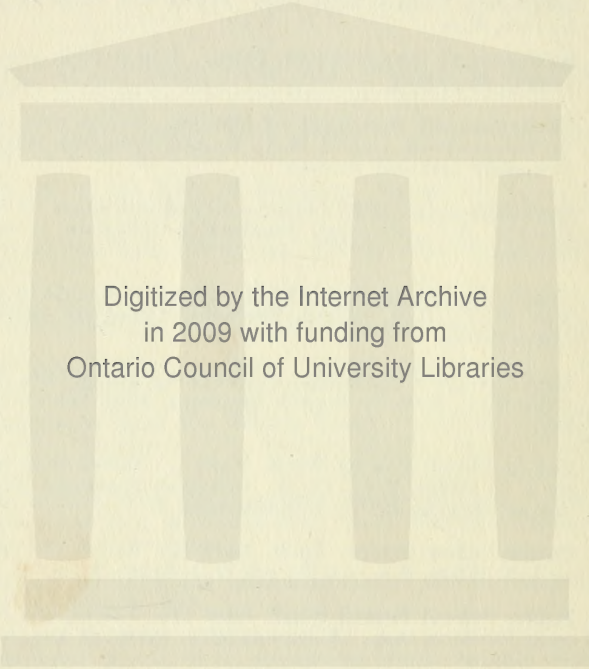
Macmillan's Literature Series

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THE HIGH SCHOOL PROSE BOOK

PART I.

EDITED WITH NOTES

BY

O. J. STEVENSON, M.A., D.PÆD.

Assistant Master, Normal School, Toronto

TORONTO

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
OF CANADA, LIMITED

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN making the following selections the Editor has had in mind the instructions contained in the High School Programme or Studies Regarding the Teaching of Literature in the Lower School :—

“The object of the course in the Lower School is the cultivation of a taste for good literature, not by minute critical study, but by reading at home and in school, aloud and silently, with due attention to the meaning, standard authors whose works will quicken the imagination and present a strong element of interest. Such works should be chiefly narrative, descriptive, and dramatic.”

There are, of course, many considerations which have entered into the choice of the selections contained in both the First and Second Prose Books,—such as copyright, as well as length, difficulty, unity of thought, etc. It has, however, been the aim of the Editor to select from standard authors passages which would excite the interest of the pupils, and which might at the same time afford good examples of different varieties of prose style, and various types of narration and description.

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First Prose Book

GULLIVER'S ARRIVAL IN LILLIPUT

From *Gulliver's Travels*

ON the 5th of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the weather being very hazy, the seamen spied a rock within half a cable's length of the ship; but the wind was so strong that we were driven directly upon it, and immediately split. Six of ⁵ the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the boat into the sea, made a shift to get clear of the ship and the rock. We rowed, by my computation, about three leagues, till we were able to work no longer, being already spent with labour while we were in the ship. We there-¹⁰ fore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was upset by a sudden flurry from the north. What became of my companions in the boat, as well as of those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but ¹⁵ conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom; but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; ²⁰ and by this time the storm was much abated. The declivity was so small, that I walked near a mile before I got to the shore, which I conjectured was about eight o'clock in the evening. I then advanced forward near half a mile, but could not discover any sign of houses ²⁵

or inhabitants; at least I was in so weak a condition that I did not observe them. I was extremely tired, and with that, and the heat of the weather, and about half a pint of brandy that I drank as I left the ship, I⁵ found myself much inclined to sleep. I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder than ever I remembered to have done in my life, and, as I reckoned, about nine hours; for when I awaked, it was just daylight. I attempted to rise,¹⁰ but was not able to stir, for, as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ligatures across my body,¹⁵ from my armpits to my thighs. I could only look upwards; the sun began to grow hot, and the light offended my eyes. I heard a confused noise about me; but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my²⁰ left leg, which, advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when, bending my eyes downward as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back. In²⁵ the meantime, I felt at least forty more of the same kind (as I conjectured) following the first. I was in the utmost astonishment, and roared so loud that they all ran back in fright; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, were hurt by the falls they got by leaping³⁰ from my sides upon the ground. However, they soon returned, and one of them who ventured so far as to get a full sight of my face, lifting up his hands and eyes by way of admiration, cried out in a shrill but distinct voice, *Hekinah degul!* the others repeated the same³⁵ words several times, but I then knew not what they meant.

I lay all this while, as the reader may believe, in

great uneasiness; at length, struggling to get loose, I had the fortune to break the strings, and wrench out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground; for by lifting it up to my face, I discovered the methods they had taken to bind me, and at the same time with⁵ a violent pull, which gave me excessive pain, I a little loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was just able to turn my head about two inches. But the creatures ran off a second time, before I could seize them; whereupon there was a great shout¹⁰ in a very shrill accent, and after it had ceased I heard one of them cry aloud, *Tolgo phonac*; when in an instant I felt above a hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and besides, they shot another flight into the air, as we do¹⁵ bombs in Europe, whereof many, I suppose, fell on my body (though I felt them not), and some on my face, which I immediately covered with my left hand. When this shower of arrows was over, I fell a groaning with grief and pain; and then striving again to get²⁰ loose, they discharged another volley larger than the first, and some of them attempted with spears to stick me in the sides; but by good luck I had on me a buff jerkin,¹ which they could not pierce. I thought it the most prudent method to lie still, and my design was²⁵ to continue so till night, when, my left hand being already loose, I could easily free myself: and as for the inhabitants, I had reason to believe I might be a match for the greatest army they could bring against me, if they were all of the same size with him that I³⁰ saw. But fortune disposed otherwise of me. When the people observed I was quiet, they discharged no more arrows; but, by the noise I heard, I knew their numbers increased; and about four yards from me, over against my right ear, I heard a knocking for above³⁵

¹ buff jerkin—A waistcoat made of buff leather, which is light yellow in colour.

an hour, like that of people at work; when turning my head that way, as well as the pegs and strings would permit me, I saw a stage erected about a foot and a half from the ground, capable of holding four of the inhabitants, with two or three ladders to mount it; from whence one of them, who seemed to be a person of quality, made me a long speech, whereof I understood not one syllable. But I should have mentioned, that before the principal person began his oration, he cried out three times, *Langro dehul san* (these words and the former were afterwards repeated and explained to me). Whereupon, immediately about fifty of the inhabitants came and cut the string that fastened the left side of my head, which gave me the liberty of turning it to the right, and of observing the person and gesture of him that was to speak. He appeared to be of middle age, and taller than any of the other three who attended him, whereof one was a page that held up his train, and seemed to be somewhat longer than my middle finger; the other two stood one on each side to support him. He acted every part of an orator, and I could observe many periods¹ of threatenings, and others of promises, pity and kindness. I answered in a few words, but in a most submissive manner, lifting up my left hand and both my eyes to the sun, as calling him for a witness; and being almost famished with hunger, not having eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship, I found the demands of nature so strong upon me that I could not forbear showing my impatience (perhaps against the strict rules of decency), by putting my finger frequently to my mouth, to signify that I wanted food. The *hurgo* (for so they call a great lord, as I afterwards learnt) understood me very well. He descended from the stage, and commanded that several ladders should be applied to my sides, on which above a hundred of the

¹ periods—Sentences.

inhabitants mounted, and walked towards my mouth, laden with baskets full of meat, which had been provided and sent thither by the king's orders, upon the first intelligence he received of me. I observed there was the flesh of several animals, but could not distinguish them by the taste. There were shoulders, legs and loins, shaped like those of mutton, and very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I ate them by two and three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time about the bigness of musket bullets. They supplied me as fast as they could, showing a thousand marks of wonder and astonishment at my bulk and appetite.

I then made another sign that I wanted drink. They found by my eating that a small quantity would not suffice me; and being a most ingenious people, they slung up, with great dexterity, one of their largest hogsheads, then rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top; I drank it off at a draught, which I might well do, for it did not hold half a pint, and tasted like a small wine of Burgundy, but much more delicious. They brought me a second hogshead, which I drank in the same manner, and made signs for more; but they had none to give me. When I had performed these wonders they shouted for joy, and danced upon my breast, repeating several times as they did at first *Hekinah degul*. They then made me a sign that I should throw down the two hogsheads, but first warning the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, *Borach mevolah*; and when they saw the vessels in the air, there was a universal shout of *Hekinah degul*. I confess I was often tempted, while they were passing backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground. But the remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do, and the promise of honour I made them—

for so I interpreted my submissive behaviour—soon drove out these imaginations. Besides, I now considered myself as bound by the laws of hospitality, to a people who had treated me with so much expense and magnificence. However, in my thoughts I could not sufficiently wonder at the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals, who durst venture to mount and walk upon my body while one of my hands was at liberty, without trembling at the very sight of so prodigious a creature as I must appear to them. After some time, when they observed that I made no more demands for meat, there appeared before me a person of high rank from his imperial majesty. His excellency, having mounted on the small of my right leg, advanced forwards up to my face, with about a dozen of his retinue, and producing his credentials under the signet royal, which he applied close to my eyes, spoke about ten minutes without any signs of anger, but with a kind of determinate resolution; often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant, whither it was agreed by his majesty in council that I must be conveyed. I answered in few words, but to no purpose, and made a sign with my hand that was loose, putting it to the other (but over his excellency's head for fear of hurting him or his train), and then to my own head and body, to signify that I desired my liberty.

It appeared that he understood me well enough, for he shook his head by way of disapprobation, and held his hands in a posture to show that I must be carried as a prisoner. However, he made other signs, to let me understand that I should have meat and drink enough, and very good treatment. Whereupon I once more thought of attempting to break my bonds; but again, when I felt the smart of their arrows upon my face and hands, which were all in blisters, and many of the darts still sticking in them, and observing like-

wise that the number of my enemies increased, I gave tokens to let them know that they might do with me what they pleased. Upon this, the *hurgo* and his train withdrew, with much civility and cheerful countenances. Soon after, I heard a general shout, with⁵ frequent repetitions of the words, *Peplom selan*; and I felt great numbers of people on my left side relaxing the cords. But before this they had daubed my face and both my hands with a sort of ointment, very pleasant to the smell, which, in a few minutes, removed¹⁰ all the smart of their arrows. These circumstances, added to the refreshment I had received by their victuals and drink, which were very nourishing, disposed me to sleep. I slept about eight hours, as I was afterwards assured; and it was no wonder, for¹⁵ the physicians, by the emperor's order, had mingled a sleepy potion in the hogsheads of wine.

It seems that upon the first moment I was discovered sleeping on the ground, after my landing, the emperor had early notice of it by an express; and determined in²⁰ council, that I should be tied in the manner I have related (which was done in the night while I slept), that plenty of meat and drink should be sent to me, and a machine prepared to carry me to the capital city. This resolution perhaps may appear very bold and²⁵ dangerous, and I am confident would not be imitated by any prince in Europe on the like occasion. However, in my opinion, it was extremely prudent, as well as generous; for, supposing these people had endeavoured to kill me with their spears and arrows, while I was³⁰ asleep, I should certainly have awaked with the first sense of smart, which might so far have aroused my rage and strength as to have enabled me to break the strings wherewith I was tied; after which, as they were not able to make resistance, so they could expect³⁵ no mercy.

These people are most excellent mathematicians,

and arrived to a great perfection in mechanics by the countenance and encouragement of the emperor, who is a renowned patron of learning. This prince has several machines fixed on wheels, for the carriage of
5 trees and other great weights. He often builds his largest men of war, whereof some are nine feet long, in the woods where the timber grows, and has them carried on these engines three or four hundred yards to the sea. Five hundred carpenters and engineers
10 were immediately set at work to prepare the greatest engine they had. It was a frame of wood raised three inches from the ground, about seven feet long and four wide, moving upon twenty-two wheels. The shout I heard was upon the arrival of this engine,
15 which, it seems, set out in four hours after my landing. It was brought parallel to me as I lay. But the principal difficulty was to raise and place me in this vehicle. Eighty poles, each of one foot high, were erected for this purpose, and very strong cords, of the
20 bigness of packthread, were fastened by hooks to many bandages, which the workmen had girt around my neck, my hands, my body and my legs. Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to draw up these cords, by many pulleys fastened on the poles; and
25 thus, in less than three hours, I was raised and slung into the engine, and there tied fast. All this I was told; for, while the operation was performing, I lay in a profound sleep, by the force of that soporiferous medicine infused into my liquor. Fifteen hundred of
30 the emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, were employed to draw me towards the metropolis, which as I said, was half a mile distant.

About four hours after we began our journey, I
35 awakened by a very ridiculous accident; for the carriage being stopped awhile to adjust something that was out of order, two or three of the young natives had the curiosity to see how I looked when I was asleep; they

climbed up into the engine, and advanced very softly to my face; one of them, an officer in the guards, put the sharp end of his half-pike a good way up into my left nostril which tickled my nose like a straw, and made me sneeze violently; whereupon they stole off⁵ unperceived, and it was three weeks before I knew the cause of my waking so suddenly. We made a long march the remaining part of the day, and rested at night with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows,¹⁰ ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir. The next morning at sunrise we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon. The emperor, and all his court, came out to meet us, but his great officers would by no means¹⁵ suffer his majesty to endanger his person by mounting on my body.

—JONATHAN SWIFT [1667-1742].

THE GREAT STONE FACE¹

From The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales

ONE afternoon, when the sun was going down, a mother and her little boy sat at the door of their cot-²⁵ tage, talking about the Great Stone Face. They had but to lift their eyes, and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features.

And what was the Great Stone Face?

30

Embosomed amongst a family of lofty mountains, there was a valley so spacious that it contained many thousand inhabitants. Some of these good people dwelt in log-huts, with the black forest all around

¹ **The Great Stone Face** symbolises the character of an ideal man. In what respects did Mr. Gathergold, General Blood-and-Thunder, the statesman and the poet, fall short of this ideal?

them, on the steep and difficult hill-sides. Others had their homes in comfortable farm-houses, and cultivated the rich soil on the gentle slopes or level surfaces of the valley. Others, again, were congregated into populous villages, where some wild, highland rivulet, tumbling down from its birthplace in the upper mountain region, had been caught and tamed by human cunning, and compelled to turn the machinery of cotton-factories. The inhabitants of this valley, in short, were numerous, and of many modes of life. But all of them, grown people and children, had a kind of familiarity with the Great Stone Face, although some possessed the gift of distinguishing this grand natural phenomenon more perfectly than many of their neighbours.

The Great Stone Face, then, was a work of nature in her mood of majestic playfulness, formed on the perpendicular side of a mountain by some immense rocks, which had been thrown together in such a position as, when viewed at a proper distance, precisely to resemble the features of the human countenance. It seemed as if an enormous giant, or a Titan,¹ had sculptured his own likeness on the precipice. There was the broad arch of the forehead, a hundred feet in height; the nose, with its long bridge; and the vast lips, which, if they could have spoken, would have rolled their thunder accents from one end of the valley to the other. True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage, and could discern only a heap of ponderous and gigantic rocks, piled in chaotic ruin one upon another. Retracing his steps, however, the wondrous features would again be seen; and the farther he withdrew from them, the more like a human face, with all its original divinity intact, did they appear; until, as it grew dim in the distance, with the clouds and glorified vapour of

¹ **Titan**—The Titans were giants of Greek mythology.

the mountains clustering about it, the Great Stone Face seemed positively to be alive.

It was a happy lot for children to grow up to manhood or womanhood with the Great Stone Face before their eyes, for all the features were noble, and the expression was at once grand and sweet, as if it were the glow of a vast warm heart, that embraced all mankind in its affections, and had room for more. It was an education only to look at it. According to the belief of many people, the valley owed much of its fertility¹⁰ to this benign aspect that was continually beaming over it, illuminating the clouds, and infusing its tenderness into the sunshine.

As we began with saying, a mother and her little boy sat at their cottage door, gazing at the Great Stone Face, and talking about it. The child's name was Ernest.

"Mother," said he, while the Titanic visage smiled on him, "I wish that it could speak, for it looks so very kindly that its voice must needs be pleasant. If²⁰ I were to see a man with such a face, I should love him dearly."

"If an old prophecy should come to pass," answered his mother, "we may see a man, some time or other, with exactly such a face as that."²⁵

"What prophecy do you mean, dear mother?" eagerly inquired Ernest. "Pray tell me all about it!"

So his mother told him a story that her own mother had told to her, when she herself was younger than³⁰ little Ernest; a story, not of things that were past, but of what was yet to come; a story, nevertheless, so very old, that even the Indians, who formerly inhabited this valley, had heard it from their forefathers, to whom, as they affirmed, it had been murmured by the mountain streams, and whispered by the wind among³⁵ the tree-tops. The purport was, that, at some future

day, a child should be born hereabouts, who was destined to become the greatest and noblest personage of his time, and whose countenance, in manhood, should bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face.

⁵ Not a few old-fashioned people, and young ones likewise, in the ardour of their hopes, still cherished an enduring faith in this old prophecy. But others, who had seen more of the world, had watched and waited till they were weary, and had beheld no man with such
¹⁰ a face, nor any man that proved to be much greater or nobler than his neighbours, concluded it to be nothing but an idle tale. At all events, the great man of the prophecy had not yet appeared.

“O mother, dear mother!” cried Ernest, clapping
¹⁵ his hands above his head, “I do hope that I shall live to see him!”

His mother was an affectionate and thoughtful woman, and felt that it was wisest not to discourage the generous hopes of her little boy. So she only said
²⁰ to him, “Perhaps you may.”

And Ernest never forgot the story that his mother told him. It was always in his mind, whenever he looked upon the Great Stone Face. He spent his childhood in the log cottage where he was born, and
²⁵ was dutiful to his mother, and helpful to her in many things, assisting her much with his little hands, and more with his loving heart. In this manner, from a happy yet often pensive child, he grew up to be a mild, quiet, unobtrusive boy, and sun-browned with
³⁰ labour in the fields, but with more intelligence brightening in his aspect than is seen in many lads who have been taught at famous schools. Yet Ernest had had no teacher, save only that the Great Stone Face became one to him. When the toil of the day was over,
³⁵ he would gaze at it for hours, until he began to imagine that those vast features recognised him, and gave him a smile of kindness and encouragement, re-

sponsive to his own look of veneration. We must not take upon us to affirm that this was a mistake, although the Face may have looked no more kindly at Ernest than at all the world besides. But the secret was that the boy's tender and confiding simplicity⁵ discerned what other people could not see; and thus the love, which was meant for all, became his peculiar portion.

About this time there went a rumour throughout the valley, that the great man, foretold from ages long ago, who was to bear a resemblance to the Great Stone Face, had appeared at last. It seems that, many years before, a young man had migrated from the valley and settled at a distant seaport, where, after getting together a little money, he had set up as a shopkeeper.¹⁵ His name—but I could never learn whether it was his real one, or a nickname that had grown out of his habits and success in life—was Gathergold. Being shrewd and active, and endowed by Providence with that inscrutable faculty which develops itself in what the world calls luck, he became an exceedingly rich merchant, and owner of a whole fleet of bulky-bottomed ships. All the countries of the globe appeared to join hands for the mere purpose of adding heap after heap to the mountainous accumulation of this one man's wealth.²⁵ The cold regions of the north, almost within the gloom and shadow of the Arctic Circle, sent him their tribute in the shape of furs; hot Africa sifted for him the golden sands of her rivers, and gathered up the ivory tusks of her great elephants out of the forests; the East came bringing him the rich shawls, and spices, and teas, and the effulgence of diamonds, and the gleaming purity of large pearls.³⁰ The ocean, not to be behindhand with the earth, yielded up her mighty whales, that Mr. Gathergold might sell their oil, and make a profit on it. Be the original commodity what it might, it was gold within³⁵

his grasp. It might be said of him, as of Midas in the fable, that whatever he touched with his fingers immediately glistened, and grew yellow, and was changed at once into sterling metal, or, which suited him still
5 better, into piles of coin. And, when Mr. Gathergold had become so very rich that it would have taken him a hundred years only to count his wealth, he bethought himself of his native valley, and resolved to go back thither, and end his days where he was born. With
10 this purpose in view, he sent a skilful architect to build him such a palace as should be fit for a man of his vast wealth to live in.

As I have said above, it had already been rumoured in the valley that Mr. Gathergold had turned out to
15 be the prophetic personage so long and vainly looked for, and that his visage was the perfect and undeniable similitude of the Great Stone Face. People were the more ready to believe that this must needs be the fact, when they beheld the splendid edifice that rose, as if
20 by enchantment, on the site of his father's old weather-beaten farm-house. The exterior was of marble, so dazzlingly white that it seemed as though the whole structure might melt away in the sunshine, like those humbler ones which Mr. Gathergold, in his young
25 play-days, before his fingers were gifted with the touch of transmutation, had been accustomed to build of snow. It had a richly ornamented portico, supported by tall pillars, beneath which was a lofty door, studded with silver knobs, and made of a kind of variegated
30 wood that had been brought from beyond the sea. The windows, from the floor to the ceiling of each stately apartment, were composed, respectively, of but one enormous pane of glass, so transparently pure that it was said to be a finer medium than even the vacant
35 atmosphere. Hardly anybody had been permitted to see the interior of this palace: but it was reported, and with good semblance of truth, to be far more gor-

geous than the outside, insomuch that whatever was iron or brass in other houses was silver or gold in this; and Mr. Gathergold's bedchamber, especially, made such a glittering appearance that no ordinary man would have been able to close his eyes there. But⁵ on the other hand, Mr. Gathergold was now so inured to wealth, that perhaps he could not have closed his eyes unless where the gleam of it was certain to find its way beneath his eyelids.

In due time, the mansion was finished; next came¹⁰ the upholsterers, with magnificent furniture; then, a whole troop of black and white servants, the harbingers of Mr. Gathergold, who, in his own majestic person, was expected to arrive at sunset. Our friend Ernest, meanwhile, had been deeply stirred by the¹⁵ idea that the great man, the noble man, the man of prophecy, after so many ages of delay, was at length to be made manifest to his native valley. He knew, boy as he was, that there were a thousand ways in which Mr. Gathergold, with his vast wealth, might²⁰ transform himself into an angel of beneficence, and assume a control over human affairs as wide and benignant as the smile of the Great Stone Face. Full of faith and hope, Ernest doubted not that what the people said was true, and that now he was to behold²⁵ the living likeness of those wondrous features on the mountain-side. While the boy was still gazing up the valley, and fancying, as he always did, that the Great Stone Face returned his gaze and looked kindly at him, the rumbling of wheels was heard, approach-³⁰ ing swiftly along the winding road.

"Here he comes!" cried a group of people who were assembled to witness the arrival. "Here comes the great Mr. Gathergold!"

A carriage, drawn by four horses, dashed round the³⁵ turn of the road. Within it, thrust partly out of the window, appeared the physiognomy of the old man,

with a skin as yellow as if his own Midas-hand had transmuted it. He had a low forehead, small, sharp eyes, puckered about with innumerable wrinkles, and very thin lips, which he made still thinner by pressing⁵ them forcibly together.

“The very image of the Great Stone Face!” shouted the people. “Sure enough, the old prophecy is true; and here we have the great man come at last!”

And, what greatly perplexed Ernest, they seemed¹⁰ actually to believe that here was the likeness which they spoke of. By the roadside there chanced to be an old beggar-woman and two little beggar children, stragglers from some far-off region, who, as the carriage rolled onward, held out their hands and lifted up¹⁵ their doleful voices, most piteously beseeching charity. A yellow claw—the very same that had clawed together so much wealth—poked itself out of the coach-window, and dropt some copper coins upon the ground; so that, though the great man’s name seems to have²⁰ been Gathergold, he might just as suitably have been nicknamed Scattercopper. Still, nevertheless, with an earnest shout, and evidently with as much good faith as ever, the people bellowed,—

“He is the very image of the Great Stone Face!”

²⁵ But Ernest turned sadly from the wrinkled shrewdness of that sordid visage, and gazed up the valley, where, amid a gathering mist, gilded by the last sunbeams, he could still distinguish those glorious features which had impressed themselves into his soul.
³⁰ Their aspect cheered him. What did the benign lips seem to say?

“He will come! Fear not, Ernest; the man will come!”

The years went on, and Ernest ceased to be a boy.
³⁵ He had grown to be a young man now. He attracted little notice from the other inhabitants of the valley; for they saw nothing remarkable in his way of life,

save that, when the labour of the day was over, he still loved to go apart and gaze and meditate upon the Great Stone Face. According to their idea of the matter, it was a folly, indeed, but pardonable, inasmuch as Ernest was industrious, kind, and neighbourly,⁵ and neglected no duty for the sake of indulging this idle habit. They knew not that the Great Stone Face had become a teacher to him, and that the sentiment which was expressed in it would enlarge the young man's heart, and fill it with wider and deeper¹⁰ sympathies than other hearts. They knew not that thence would come a better wisdom than could be learned from books, and a better life than could be moulded on the defaced example of other human lives. Neither did Ernest know that the thoughts and affec-¹⁵tions which came to him so naturally, in the fields and at the fireside, and whenever he communed with himself, were of a higher tone than those which all men shared with him. A simple soul,—simple as when his mother first taught him the old prophecy,—he²⁰ beheld the marvellous features beaming adown the valley, and still wondered that their human counterpart was so long in making his appearance.

By this time poor Mr. Gathergold was dead and buried; and the oddest part of the matter was, that²⁵ his wealth, which was the body and spirit of his existence, had disappeared before his death, leaving nothing of him but a living skeleton, covered over with a wrinkled yellow skin. Since the melting away of his gold, it had been very generally conceded that³⁰ there was no such striking resemblance, after all, betwixt the ignoble features of the ruined merchant and that majestic face upon the mountain-side. So the people ceased to honour him during his lifetime, and quietly consigned him to forgetfulness after his³⁵ decease. Once in a while, it is true, his memory was brought up in connection with the magnificent palace

which he had built, and which had long ago been turned into a hotel for the accommodation of strangers, multitudes of whom came, every summer, to visit that famous natural curiosity, the Great Stone Face.

⁵ Thus, Mr. Gathergold being discredited and thrown into the shade, the man of prophecy was yet to come.

It so happened that a native-born son of the valley many years before, had enlisted as a soldier, and after a great deal of hard fighting, had now become
¹⁰ an illustrious commander. Whatever he may be called in history, he was known in camps and on the battle-field under the nickname of Old Blood-and-Thunder. This war-worn veteran, being now infirm with age and wounds, and weary of the turmoil of a
¹⁵ military life, and of the roll of the drum and the clangour of the trumpet, that had so long been ringing in his ears, had lately signified a purpose of returning to his native valley, hoping to find repose where he remembered to have left it. The inhabitants, his old neighbours and their grown-up children, were resolved to welcome the renowned warrior with a salute of cannon and a public dinner; and all the more enthusiastically, it being affirmed that now, at last, the likeness of the Great Stone Face had actually appeared. An
²⁵ aide-de-camp of Old Blood-and-Thunder, travelling through the valley, was said to have been struck with the resemblance. Moreover the schoolmates and early acquaintances of the general were ready to testify, on oath, that, to the best of their recollection, the afore-
³⁰ said general had been exceedingly like the majestic image, even when a boy, only that the idea had never occurred to them at that period. Great, therefore, was the excitement throughout the valley; and many people, who had never once thought of glancing at the
³⁵ Great Stone Face for years before, now spent their time in gazing at it, for the sake of knowing exactly how General Blood-and-Thunder looked.

On the day of the great festival, Ernest, with all the other people of the valley, left their work, and proceeded to the spot where the sylvan banquet was prepared. As he approached, the loud voice of the Rev. Dr. Battleblast was heard, beseeching a blessing⁵ on the good things set before them, and on the distinguished friend of peace in whose honour they were assembled. The tables were arranged in a cleared space of the woods, shut in by the surrounding trees, except where a vista opened eastward, and afforded a¹⁰ distant view of the Great Stone Face. Over the general's chair which was a relic from the home of Washington, there was an arch of verdant boughs, with the laurel profusely intermixed, and surmounted by his country's banner, beneath which he had won his vic-¹⁵ tories. Our friend Ernest raised himself on his tiptoes, in hopes to get a glimpse of the celebrated guest; but there was a mighty crowd about the table anxious to hear the toasts and speeches, and to catch any word that might fall from the general in reply; and a vol-²⁰ unteer company, doing duty as a guard, pricked ruthlessly with their bayonets at any particularly quiet person among the throng. So Ernest, being of an unobtrusive character, was thrust quite into the back-²⁵ ground, where he could see no more of Old Blood-and-Thunder's physiognomy than if it had been still blazing on the battle-field. To console himself, he turned towards the Great Stone Face, which, like a faithful and long-remembered friend, looked back and smiled upon him through the vista of the forest.³⁰ Meantime, however, he could overhear the remarks of various individuals, who were comparing the features of the hero with the face on the distant mountain-side.

"'Tis the same face to a hair!" cried one man, cutting a caper for joy.³⁵

"Wonderfully like, that's a fact!" responded another.

“Like! why, I call it Old Blood-and-Thunder himself, in a monstrous looking-glass!” cried a third. “And why not? He’s the greatest man of this or any other age, beyond a doubt.”

⁵ And then all three of the speakers gave a great shout, which communicated electricity to the crowd, and called forth a roar from a thousand voices, that went reverberating for miles among the mountains, until you might have supposed that the Great Stone
¹⁰ Face had poured its thunder-breath into the cry. All these comments, and this vast enthusiasm, served the more to interest our friend; nor did he think of questioning that now, at length, the mountain-visage had found its human counterpart. It is true, Ernest had
¹⁵ imagined that this long-looked-for personage would appear in the character of a man of peace, uttering wisdom and doing good, and making people happy. But, taking an habitual breadth of view, with all his simplicity, he contended that Providence should choose
²⁰ its own method of blessing mankind, and could conceive that this great end might be effected even by a warrior and a bloody sword, should inscrutable wisdom see fit to order matters so.

“The general! the general!” was now the cry.
²⁵ “Hush! silence! Old Blood-and-Thunder’s going to make a speech.”

Even so; for, the cloth being removed, the general’s health had been drunk, amid shouts of applause, and he now stood upon his feet to thank the company.
³⁰ Ernest saw him. There he was, over the shoulders of the crowd, from the two glittering epaulets and embroidered collar upward, beneath the arch of green boughs with intertwined laurel, and the banner drooping as if to shade his brow! And there, too, visible
³⁵ in the same glance, through the vista of the forest, appeared the Great Stone Face! And was there, indeed, such a resemblance as the crowd had testified?

Alas, Ernest could not recognise it! He beheld a war-worn and weather-beaten countenance, full of energy and expressive of an iron will; but the gentle wisdom, the deep, broad, tender sympathies, were altogether wanting in Old Blood-and-Thunder's visage;⁵ and even if the Great Stone Face had assumed his look of stern command, the milder traits would still have tempered it.

"This is not the man of prophecy," sighed Ernest to himself, as he made his way out of the throng.¹⁰ "And must the world wait longer yet?"

The mists had congregated about the distant mountain-side, and there were seen the grand and awful features of the Great Stone Face, awful but benignant, as if a mighty angel were sitting among the hills, and¹⁵ enrobing himself in a cloud-vesture of gold and purple. As he looked, Ernest could hardly believe but that a smile beamed over the whole visage, with a radiance still brightening, although without motion of the lips. It was probably the effect of the western²⁰ sunshine, melting through the thinly diffused vapours that had swept between him and the object that he gazed at. But—as it always did—the aspect of his marvellous friend made Ernest as hopeful as if he had never hoped in vain.²⁵

"Fear not, Ernest," said his heart, even as if the Great Face were whispering to him,—“fear not, Ernest; he will come.”

More years sped swiftly and tranquilly away. Ernest still dwelt in his native valley, and was now a³⁰ man of middle age. By imperceptible degrees he had become known among the people. Now, as heretofore, he laboured for his bread, and was the same simple-hearted man that he had always been. But he had thought and felt so much, he had given so many of³⁵ the best hours of his life to unworldly hopes for some great good to mankind, that it seemed as though he

had been talking with the angels, and had imbibed a portion of their wisdom unawares. It was visible in the calm and well-considered beneficence of his daily life, the quiet stream of which had made a wide green margin all along its course. Not a day passed by that the world was not the better because this man, humble as he was, had lived. He never stepped aside from his own path, yet would always reach a blessing to his neighbour. Almost involuntarily, too, he had become a preacher. The pure and high simplicity of his thought, which, as one of its manifestations, took shape in the good deeds that dropped silently from his hand, flowed also forth in speech. He uttered truths that wrought upon and moulded the lives of those who heard him. His auditors, it may be, never suspected that Ernest, their own neighbour and familiar friend, was more than an ordinary man; least of all did Ernest himself suspect it; but, inevitably as the murmur of a rivulet, came thoughts out of his mouth that no other human lips had spoken.

When the people's minds had had a little time to cool, they were ready enough to acknowledge their mistake in imagining a similarity between General Blood-and-Thunder's truculent physiognomy¹ and the benign visage on the mountain-side. But now, again, there were reports and many paragraphs in the newspapers, affirming that the likeness of the Great Stone Face had appeared upon the broad shoulders of a certain eminent statesman. He, like Mr. Gathergold, and Old Blood-and-Thunder, was a native of the valley, but had left it in his early days, and taken up the trades of law and politics. Instead of the rich man's wealth and the warrior's sword, he had but a tongue, and it was mightier than both together. So wonderfully eloquent was he, that whatever he might choose to say, his auditors had no choice but to be-

¹ **truculent physiognomy**—A fierce countenance.

lieve him; wrong looked right, and right like wrong; for when it pleased him, he could make a kind of illuminated fog with his mere breath, and obscure the natural daylight with it. His tongue, indeed, was a magic instrument: sometimes it rumbled like the thunder; sometimes it warbled like the sweetest music. It was the blast of war,—the song of peace; and it seemed to have a heart in it, when there was no such matter. In good truth, he was a wondrous man; and when his tongue had acquired him all other imaginable success,—when it had been heard in halls of state, and in the courts of princes and potentates,—after it had made him known all over the world, even as a voice crying from shore to shore,—it finally persuaded his countrymen to select him for the Presidency. Before this time,—indeed, as soon as he began to grow celebrated,—his admirers had found out the resemblance between him and the Great Stone Face; and so much were they struck by it, that throughout the country this distinguished gentleman was known by the name of Old Stony Phiz. The phrase was considered as giving a highly favourable aspect to his political prospects; for, as is likewise the case with the Popedom, nobody ever becomes President without taking a name other than his own.

While his friends were doing their best to make him President, Old Stony Phiz, as he was called, set out on a visit to the valley where he was born. Of course, he had no other object than to shake hands with his fellow-citizens, and neither thought nor cared about any effect which his progress through the country might have upon the election. Magnificent preparations were made to receive the illustrious statesman; a cavalcade of horsemen set forth to meet him at the boundary line of the state, and all the people left their business and gathered along the wayside to see him pass. Among these was Ernest. Though

more than once disappointed, as we have seen, he had such a hopeful and confiding nature, that he was always ready to believe in whatever seemed beautiful and good. He kept his heart continually open, and
5 thus was sure to catch the blessing from on high when it should come. So now again, as buoyantly as ever, he went forth to behold the likeness of the Great Stone Face.

The cavalcade came prancing along the road, with a
10 great clattering of hoofs and a mighty cloud of dust, which rose up so dense and high that the visage of the mountain-side was completely hidden from Ernest's eyes. All the great men of the neighbourhood were there on horseback; militia officers in uniform; the
15 member of Congress; the sheriff of the county; the editors of newspapers; and many a farmer, too, had mounted his patient steed, with his Sunday coat upon his back. It really was a very brilliant spectacle, especially as there were numerous banners flaunting over
20 the cavalcade, on some of which were gorgeous portraits of the illustrious statesman and the Great Stone Face, smiling familiarly at one another, like two brothers. If the pictures were to be trusted, the mutual resemblance, it must be confessed, was marvellous. We
25 must not forget to mention that there was a band of music, which made the echoes of the mountains ring and reverberate with the loud triumph of its strains; so that airy and soul-thrilling melodies broke out among all the heights and hollows, as if every nook of his
30 native valley had found a voice, to welcome the distinguished guest. But the grandest effect was when the far-off mountain precipice flung back the music; for then the Great Stone Face itself seemed to be swelling the triumphant chorus, in acknowledgment
35 that, at length, the man of prophecy was come.

All this while the people were throwing up their hats and shouting, with enthusiasm so contagious that

the heart of Ernest kindled up, and he likewise threw up his hat, and shouted, as loudly as the loudest, "Huzza for the great man! Huzza for Old Stony Phiz!" But as yet he had not seen him.

"Here he is now!" cried those who stood near Ernest. "There! There! Look at Old Stony Phiz and then at the Old Man of the Mountain, and see if they are not as like as two twin-brothers!"

In the midst of all this gallant array came an open barouche,¹ drawn by four white horses; and in the¹⁰ barouche, with his massive head uncovered, sat the illustrious statesman, Old Stony Phiz himself.

"Confess it," said one of Ernest's neighbours to him, "the Great Stone Face has met its match at last!"

Now, it must be owned that, at his first glimpse of¹⁵ the countenance which was bowing and smiling from the barouche, Ernest did fancy that there was a resemblance between it and the old familiar face upon the mountain-side. The brow, with its massive depth and loftiness, and all the other features, indeed, were²⁰ boldly and strongly hewn, as if in emulation of a more than heroic, of a Titanic model. But the sublimity and stateliness, the grand expression of a divine sympathy, that illuminated the mountain visage and etherealised its ponderous granite substance into spirit,²⁵ might here be sought in vain. Something had been originally left out, or had departed. And therefore the marvellously gifted statesman had always a weary gloom in the deep caverns of his eyes, as of a child that has outgrown its playthings or a man of mighty³⁰ faculties and little aims, whose life, with all its high performances, was vague and empty, because no high purpose had endowed it with reality.

Still, Ernest's neighbour was thrusting his elbow into his side, and pressing him for an answer.

35

¹ *barouche*—A four-wheeled open carriage with a movable top.

“Confess! confess! Is not he the very picture of your Old Man of the Mountain?”

“No!” said Ernest, bluntly, “I see little or no likeness.”

5 “Then so much the worse for the Great Stone Face!” answered his neighbour; and again he set up a shout for Old Stony Phiz.

But Ernest turned away, melancholy, and almost despondent: for this was the saddest of his disappointments, to behold a man who might have fulfilled the prophecy, and had not willed to do so. Meantime, the cavalcade, the banners, the music, and the barouches swept past him, with the vociferous crowd in the rear, leaving the dust to settle down and the
15 Great Stone Face to be revealed again, with the grandeur that it had worn for untold centuries.

“Lo, here I am, Ernest!” the benign lips seemed to say. “I have waited longer than thou, and am not yet weary. Fear not; the man will come.”

20 The years hurried onward, treading in their haste on one another’s heels. And now they began to bring white hairs, and scatter them over the head of Ernest; they made reverend wrinkles across his forehead, and furrows in his cheeks. He was an aged man. But
25 not in vain had he grown old: more than the white hairs on his head were the sage thoughts in his mind; his wrinkles and furrows were inscriptions that Time had graved, and in which he had written legends of wisdom that had been tested by the tenor of a life.

30 And Ernest had ceased to be obscure. Unsought for, undesired, had come the fame which so many seek, and made him known in the great world, beyond the limits of the valley in which he had dwelt so quietly. College professors, and even the active men of cities, came
35 from far to see and converse with Ernest; for the report had gone abroad that this simple husbandman had ideas unlike those of other men, not gained from

books, but of a higher tone,—a tranquil and familiar majesty, as if he had been talking with the angels as his daily friends. Whether it were sage, statesman, or philanthropist, Ernest received these visitors with the gentle sincerity that had characterised him from⁵ boyhood, and spoke freely with them of whatever came uppermost, or lay deepest in his heart or their own. While they talked together, his face would kindle, un-awares, and shine upon them, as with a mild evening light. Pensive with the fulness of such discourse, his¹⁰ guests took leave and went their way; and passing up the valley, paused to look at the Great Stone Face, imagining that they had seen its likeness in a human countenance, but could not remember where.

While Ernest had been growing up and growing¹⁵ old, a bountiful Providence had granted a new poet to this earth. He, likewise, was a native of the valley, but had spent the greater part of his life at a distance from that romantic region, pouring out his sweet music amid the bustle and din of cities. Often, how-²⁰ ever, did the mountains which had been familiar to him in his childhood lift their snowy peaks into the clear atmosphere of his poetry. Neither was the Great Stone Face forgotten, for the poet had celebrated it in an ode, which was grand enough to have been²⁵ uttered by its own majestic lips. This man of genius, we may say, had come down from heaven with wonderful endowments. If he sang of a mountain, the eyes of all mankind beheld a mightier grandeur reposing on its breast, or soaring to its summit, than had³⁰ before been seen there. If his theme were a lovely lake, a celestial smile had now been thrown over it, to gleam forever on its surface. If it were the vast old sea, even the deep immensity of its dread bosom seemed to swell the higher, as if moved by the emo-³⁵ tions of the song. Thus the world assumed another and a better aspect from the hour that the poet blessed

it with his happy eyes. The Creator had bestowed him, as the last best touch to His own handiwork. Creation was not finished till the poet came to interpret, and so complete it.

⁵ The effect was no less high and beautiful, when his human brethren were the subject of his verse. The man or woman sordid with the common dust of life, who crossed his daily path, and the little child who played in it, were glorified if he beheld them in his
¹⁰ mood of poetic faith. He showed the golden links of the great chain that intertwined them with an angelic kindred; he brought out the hidden traits of a celestial birth that made them worthy of such kin. Some, indeed, there were, who thought to show the soundness
¹⁵ of their judgment by affirming that all the beauty and dignity of the natural world existed only in the poet's fancy. Let such men speak for themselves, who undoubtedly appear to have been spawned forth by Nature with a contemptuous bitterness; she having
²⁰ plastered them up out of her refuse stuff, after all the swine were made. As respects all things else, the poet's ideal was the truest truth.

The songs of this poet found their way to Ernest. He read them after his customary toil, seated on the
²⁵ bench before his cottage door, where for such a length of time he had filled his repose with thought, by gazing at the Great Stone Face. And now as he read stanzas that caused the soul to thrill within him, he lifted his eyes to the vast countenance beaming on him
³⁰ so benignantly.

"O majestic friend," he murmured, addressing the Great Stone Face, "is not this man worthy to resemble thee?"

The Face seemed to smile but answered not a word.
³⁵ Now it happened that the poet, though he dwelt so far away, had not only heard of Ernest, but had meditated much upon his character, until he deemed

nothing so desirable as to meet this man, whose untaught wisdom walked hand in hand with the noble simplicity of his life. One summer morning, therefore, he took passage by the railroad, and, in the decline of the afternoon, alighted from the cars at no⁵ great distance from Ernest's cottage. The great hotel, which had formerly been the palace of Mr. Gathergold, was close at hand, but the poet, with his carpet-bag on his arm, inquired at once where Ernest dwelt, and was resolved to be accepted as his guest.¹⁰

Approaching the door, he there found the good old man, holding a volume in his hand, which alternately he read, and then, with a finger between the leaves, looked lovingly at the Great Stone Face.

"Good evening," said the poet. "Can you give a¹⁵ traveller a night's lodging?"

"Willingly," answered Ernest; and then he added, smiling, "Methinks I never saw the Great Stone Face look so hospitably at a stranger."

The poet sat down on the bench beside him, and he²⁰ and Ernest talked together. Often had the poet held intercourse with the wittiest and the wisest, but never before with a man like Ernest, whose thoughts and feelings gushed up with such a natural freedom, and who made great truths so familiar by his simple utterance²⁵ of them. Angels, as had been so often said, seemed to have wrought with him at his labour in the fields; angels seemed to have sat with him by the fireside; and, dwelling with angels as friend with friends, he had imbibed the sublimity of their ideas, and imbued³⁰ it with the sweet and lowly charm of household words. So thought the poet. And Ernest, on the other hand, was moved and agitated by the living images which the poet flung out of his mind, and which peopled all the air about the cottage door with shapes of beauty,³⁵ both gay and pensive. The sympathies of these two men instructed them with a profounder sense than either

could have attained alone. Their minds accorded into one strain, and made delightful music which neither of them could have claimed as all his own, nor distinguished his own share from the other's. They led
⁵ one another, as it were, into a high pavilion of their thoughts, so remote and hitherto so dim that they had never entered it before, and so beautiful that they desired to be there always.

As Ernest listened to the poet, he imagined that
¹⁰ the Great Stone Face was bending forward to listen too. He gazed earnestly into the poet's glowing eyes.

"Who are you, my strangely gifted guest?" he said.

¹⁵ The poet laid his finger on the volume that Ernest had been reading.

"You have read these poems," said he. "You know me, then,—for I wrote them."

Again, and still more earnestly than before, Ernest
²⁰ examined the poet's features; then turned towards the Great Stone Face; then back, with an uncertain aspect, to his guest. But his countenance fell; he shook his head and sighed.

"Wherefore are you sad?" inquired the poet.

²⁵ "Because," replied Ernest, "all through life I have awaited the fulfilment of a prophecy; and, when I read these poems, I hoped that it might be fulfilled in you."

"You hoped," answered the poet, faintly smiling,
³⁰ "to find in me the likeness of the Great Stone Face. And you are disappointed, as formerly with Mr. Gathergold and Old Blood-and-Thunder, and Old Stony Phiz. Yes Ernest, it is my doom. You must add my name to the illustrious three, and record another failure
³⁵ of your hopes. For—in shame and sadness do I speak it, Ernest—I am not worthy to be typified by yonder benign and majestic image."

“And why?” asked Ernest. He pointed to the volume. “Are not those thoughts divine?”

“They have a strain of the Divinity,” replied the poet. “You can hear in them the far-off echo of a heavenly song. But my life, dear Ernest, has not cor-⁵responded with my thought. I have had grand dreams, but they have been only dreams, because I have lived—and that, too, by my own choice—among poor and mean realities. Sometimes even—shall I dare to say it?—I lack faith in the grandeur, the beauty, and the¹⁰ goodness, which my own works are said to have made more evident in nature and in human life. Why, then, pure seeker of the good and true, shouldst thou hope to find me, in yonder image of the divine?”

The poet spoke sadly, and his eyes were dim with¹⁵ tears. So, likewise, were those of Ernest.

At the hour of sunset, as had long been his frequent custom, Ernest was to discourse to an assemblage of the neighbouring inhabitants in the open air. He and the poet, arm in arm, still talking together as they²⁰ went along, proceeded to the spot. It was a small nook among the hills, with a gray precipice behind, the stern front of which was relieved by the pleasant foliage of many creeping plants that made a tapestry for the naked rock, by hanging their festoons from all²⁵ its rugged angles. At a small elevation above the ground, set in a rich framework of verdure, there appeared a niche, spacious enough to admit a human figure, with freedom for such gestures as spontaneously accompany earnest thought and genuine emotion. Into³⁰ this natural pulpit Ernest ascended, and threw a look of familiar kindness around upon his audience. They stood, or sat, or reclined upon the grass, as seemed good to each, with the departing sunshine falling obliquely over them, and mingling its subdued cheerful-³⁵ness with the solemnity of a grove of ancient trees, beneath and amid the boughs of which the golden rays

were constrained to pass. In another direction was seen the Great Stone Face, with the same cheer, combined with the same solemnity, in its benignant aspect.

⁵ Ernest began to speak, giving to the people of what was in his heart and mind. His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonised with the life which he had always lived. It
¹⁰ was not mere breath that this preacher uttered; they were the words of life, because a life of good deeds and holy love was melted into them. Pearls, pure and rich, had been dissolved into this precious draught. The poet, as he listened, felt that the being and character of
¹⁵ Ernest were a nobler strain of poetry than he had ever written. His eyes glistened with tears, he gazed reverentially at the venerable man, and said within himself that never was there an aspect so worthy of a prophet and a sage as that mild, sweet, thoughtful
²⁰ countenance, with the glory of white hair diffused about it. At a distance, but distinctly to be seen, high up in the golden light of the setting sun, appeared the Great Stone Face, with hoary mists around it, like the white hairs around the brow of Ernest. Its
²⁵ look of grand beneficence seemed to embrace the world.

At that moment, in sympathy with a thought which he was about to utter, the face of Ernest assumed a grandeur of expression, so imbued with benevolence, that the poet, by an irresistible impulse, threw his arms
³⁰ aloft, and shouted,—

“Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!”

Then all the people looked, and saw that what the deep-sighted poet said was true. The prophecy was
³⁵ fulfilled. But Ernest, having finished what he had to say, took the poet’s arm, and walked slowly homeward, still hoping that some wiser and better man than him-

self would by and by appear, bearing a resemblance to the GREAT STONE FACE.

—NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE [1804-1864].

THE MOUNTAIN OF MISERIES

From The Spectator

It is a celebrated thought of Socrates,¹ that if all the misfortunes of mankind were cast into a public stock, in order to be equally distributed among⁵ the whole species, those who now think themselves the most unhappy would prefer the share they are already possessed of before that which would fall to them by such a division. Horace² has carried this thought a great deal further in the motto of my paper,¹⁰ which implies that the hardships or misfortunes we lie under are more easy to us than those of any other person would be, in case we could change conditions with him.

As I was ruminating upon these two remarks, and¹⁵ seated in my elbow chair, I insensibly fell asleep; when, on a sudden, methought there was a proclamation made by Jupiter that every mortal should bring in his griefs and calamities, and throw them together in a heap. There was a large plain appointed for this pur-²⁰pose. I took my stand in the centre of it, and saw with a great deal of pleasure the whole human species marching one after another, and throwing down their several loads, which immediately grew up into a prodigious mountain, that seemed to rise above the clouds.²⁵

There was a certain lady of a thin airy shape, who was very active in this solemnity. She carried a mag-

¹ **Socrates**—468-399 B.C., a celebrated Athenian philosopher.

² **Horace**—65-8 B.C., a Roman poet.

nifying glass in one of her hands, and was clothed in a loose flowing robe, embroidered with several figures of fiends and spectres, that discovered themselves in a thousand chimerical shapes, as her garment hovered⁵ in the wind. There was something wild and distracted in her looks. Her name was Fancy. She led up every mortal to the appointed place, after having very officiously assisted him in making up his pack, and laying it upon his shoulders. My heart melted within me¹⁰ to see my fellow-creatures groaning under their respective burdens, and to consider that prodigious bulk of human calamities which lay before me.

There were, however, several persons who gave me great diversion upon this occasion. I observed one¹⁵ bring in a fardel very carefully concealed under an old embroidered cloak, which, upon his throwing it into the heap, I discovered to be Poverty. Another, after a great deal of puffing, threw down his luggage, which, upon examining, I found to be his wife.

²⁰ There were multitudes of lovers saddled with very whimsical burdens composed of darts and flames; but, what was very odd, though they sighed as if their hearts would break under these bundles of calamities, they could not persuade themselves to cast them into the heap,²⁵ when they came up to it; but, after a few faint efforts, shook their heads and marched away as heavy laden as they came. I saw multitudes of old women throw down their wrinkles, and several young ones who stripped themselves of a tawny skin. There were very great³⁰ heaps of red noses, large lips, and rusty teeth. The truth of it is, I was surprised to see the greatest part of the mountain made up of bodily deformities. Observing one advancing towards the heap with a larger cargo than ordinary upon his back, I found upon his³⁵ near approach that it was only a natural hump, which he disposed of, with great joy of heart, among this collection of human miseries. There were likewise

distempers of all sorts, though I could not but observe that there were many more imaginary than real. One little packet I could not but take notice of, which was a complication of all the diseases incident to human nature, and was in the hand of a great many fine⁵ people: this was called the spleen.¹ But what most of all surprised me was, a remark I made, that there was not a single vice or folly thrown into the whole heap; at which I was very much astonished, having concluded within myself that every one would take this opportunity of getting rid of his passions, prejudices, and frailties.

I took notice in particular of a very profligate fellow, who I did not question came loaded with his crimes; but upon searching into his bundle I found that instead¹⁵ of throwing his guilt from him, he had only laid down his memory. He was followed by another worthless rogue, who flung away his modesty instead of his ignorance.

When the whole race of mankind had thus cast their²⁰ burdens, the phantom which had been so busy on this occasion, seeing me an idle spectator of what had passed, approached towards me. I grew uneasy at her presence, when of a sudden she held her magnifying glass full before my eyes. I no sooner saw my face in it, but²⁵ was startled at the shortness of it, which now appeared to me in its utmost aggravation. The immoderate breadth of the features made me very much out of humour with my own countenance, upon which I threw it from me like a mask. It happened very luckily that³⁰ one who stood by me had just before thrown down his visage, which it seems was too long for him. It was indeed extended to a most shameful length; I believe the very chin was, modestly speaking, as long as my whole face. We had both of us an opportunity of³⁵ mending ourselves; and all the contributions being now

¹ the spleen—Ill-humour.

brought in, every man was at liberty to exchange his misfortunes for those of another person. But as there arose many new incidents in the sequel of my vision, I shall reserve them for the subject of my next paper.

⁵ In my last paper I gave my reader a sight of that mountain of miseries which was made up of those several calamities that afflict the minds of men. I saw with unspeakable pleasure the whole species thus delivered from its sorrows; though at the same time,
¹⁰ as we stood round the heap, and surveyed the several materials of which it was composed, there was scarcely a mortal in this vast multitude who did not discover what he thought the pleasures of life, and wondered how the owners of them ever came to look upon them
¹⁵ as burdens and grievances.

As we were regarding very attentively this confusion of miseries, this chaos of calamity, Jupiter issued out a second proclamation, that every one was now at liberty to exchange his affliction, and to return to his
²⁰ habitation with any such other bundle as should be delivered to him.

Upon this, Fancy began again to bestir herself, and, parcelling out the whole heap with incredible activity, recommended to every one his particular packet.
²⁵ The hurry and confusion at this time was not to be expressed. Some observations, which I made upon this occasion, I shall communicate to the public. A venerable, gray-headed man, who had laid down the colic, and who, I found, wanted an heir to his estate,
³⁰ snatched up an undutiful son that had been thrown into the heap by his angry father. The graceless youth, in less than a quarter of an hour, pulled the old gentleman by the beard, and had liked to have knocked his brains out; so that meeting the true father, who
³⁵ came towards him with a fit of the gripes, he begged

him to take his son again, and give him back his colic; but they were incapable either of them to recede from the choice they had made. A poor galley slave, who had thrown down his chains, took up the gout in their stead, but made such wry faces, that one might easily⁵ perceive he was no great gainer by the bargain. It was pleasant enough to see the several exchanges that were made, for sickness against poverty, hunger against want of appetite, and care against pain.

The female world were very busy among themselves¹⁰ in bartering for features: one was trucking a lock of gray hairs for a carbuncle, another was making over a short waist for a pair of round shoulders, and a third cheapening a bad face for a lost reputation; but on all these occasions there was not one of them who did not¹⁵ think the new blemish, as soon as she had got it into her possession, much more disagreeable than the old one. I made the same observation on every other misfortune or calamity which every one in the assembly brought upon himself in lieu of what he had parted²⁰ with. Whether it be that all the evils which befall us are in some measure suited and proportioned to our strength, or that every evil becomes more supportable by our being accustomed to it, I shall not determine.

I could not from my heart forbear pitying the poor²⁵ hump-backed gentleman mentioned in the former paper, who went off a very well-shaped person with a stone in his bladder; nor the fine gentleman who had struck up this bargain with him, that limped through a whole assembly of ladies, who used to admire him, with a pair³⁰ of shoulders peeping over his head.

I must not omit my own particular adventure. My friend with a long visage had no sooner taken upon him my short face, but he made such a grotesque figure in it that as I looked upon him I could not forbear laugh-³⁵ing at myself, insomuch that I put my own face out of countenance. The poor gentleman was so sensible of

the ridicule that I found he was ashamed of what he had done; on the other side I found that I myself had no great reason to triumph, for as I went to touch my forehead I missed the place, and clapped my finger⁵ under my lip. Besides, as my nose was exceeding prominent, I gave it two or three unlucky knocks as I was playing my hand about my face, and aiming at some other part of it. I saw two other gentlemen by me who were in the same ridiculous circumstances.¹⁰ These had made a foolish swop between a couple of thick bandy legs and two long trapsticks that had no calves to them. One of these looked like a man walking upon stilts, and was so lifted up into the air, above his ordinary height, that his head turned round with it;¹⁵ while the other made such awkward circles, as he attempted to walk, that he scarcely knew how to move forward upon his new supporters. Observing him to be a pleasant kind of fellow, I stuck my cane in the ground, and told him I would lay him a bottle of wine²⁰ that he did not march up to it on a line, that I drew for him, in a quarter of an hour.

The heap was at last distributed among the two sexes, who made a most piteous sight, as they wandered up and down under the pressure of their several burdens.²⁵ The whole plain was filled with murmurs and complaints, groans and lamentations. Jupiter at length, taking compassion on the poor mortals, ordered them a second time to lay down their loads, with a design to give every one his own again. They discharg-³⁰ed themselves with a great deal of pleasure; after which, the phantom who had led them into such gross delusions was commanded to disappear. There was sent in her stead a goddess of a quite different figure; her motions were steady and composed, and her aspect³⁵ serious but cheerful. She every now and then cast her eyes towards heaven, and fixed them upon Jupiter; her name was Patience. She had no sooner placed

herself by the Mount of Sorrows, but, what I thought very remarkable, the whole heap sank to such a degree that it did not appear a third part so big as it was before. She afterwards returned every man his own proper calamity, and, teaching him how to bear it in the most⁵ commodious manner, he marched off with it contentedly, being very well pleased that he had not been left to his own choice as to the kind of evils which fell to his lot.

Besides the several pieces of morality to be drawn out of this Vision, I learnt from it never to repine at¹⁰ my own misfortunes, or to envy the happiness of another, since it is impossible for any man to form a right judgment of his neighbour's sufferings, for which reason also I have determined never to think too lightly of another's complaints, but to regard the sorrows of my¹⁵ fellow-creatures with sentiments of humanity and compassion.

—JOSEPH ADDISON [1672-1719].

A HAPPY RETURN

From *Cranford*¹

Martha was beginning to go about again, and I had already fixed a limit, not very far distant, to my visit,²⁵

¹ **Cranford** is a description of the life of a group of ladies in a little English village in which "all the holders of houses above a certain rent are women." Of this little group of Cranford ladies, Miss Jenkyns and her sister, Miss Matty, both well advanced in years, are two of the most interesting. These two ladies have a brother named Peter, who ran away from home in his youth, and whom they have not heard of for many years. In the course of time Miss Jenkyns dies, and not long afterwards Miss Matty loses her money through the failure of a bank, and is forced to open a small store in order to make a living. Martha is her servant, and Miss Mary Smith, who tells the story, is a friend who visits the ladies in Cranford from time to time. Miss Smith has heard of a person of distinction in India named Jenkyns, and has written to India in the hope that he may prove to be Miss Matty's long-lost brother.

when one afternoon, as I was sitting in the shop-parlour with Miss Matty—I remember the weather was colder now than it had been in May, three weeks before, and we had a fire and kept the door fully closed—we saw
⁵ a gentleman go slowly past the window, and then stand opposite to the door, as if looking out for the name which we had so carefully hidden. He took out a double eye-glass and peered about for some time before he could discover it. Then he came in. And, all on a
¹⁰ sudden, it flashed across me that it was the Aga¹ himself! For his clothes had an out-of-the-way foreign cut about them, and his face was deep brown, as if tanned and retanned by the sun. His complexion contrasted oddly with his plentiful snow-white hair, his eyes were
¹⁵ dark and piercing, and he had an odd way of contracting them and puckering up his cheeks into innumerable wrinkles when he looked earnestly at objects. He did so to Miss Matty when he first came in. His glance had first caught and lingered a little upon me, but
²⁰ then turned, with the peculiar searching look I have described, to Miss Matty. She was a little fluttered and nervous, but no more so than she always was when any man came into her shop. She thought that he would probably have a note, or a sovereign at
²⁵ least, for which she would have to give change, which was an operation she very much disliked to perform. But the present customer stood opposite to her, without asking for anything, only looking fixedly at her as he drummed upon the table with his fingers, just for all
³⁰ the world as Miss Jenkyns used to do. Miss Matty was on the point of asking him what he wanted (as she told me afterwards), when he turned sharp to me: “Is your name Mary Smith?”

“Yes!” said I.

³⁵ All my doubts as to his identity were set at rest, and

¹ the Aga—A title of distinction or respect used in Persia and India. It is equivalent to the English word *gentleman*.

I only wondered what he would say or do next, and how Miss Matty would stand the joyful shock of what he had to reveal. Apparently he was at a loss how to announce himself, for he looked round at last in search of something to buy, so as to gain time, and as it happened, his eyes caught on the almond-comfits, and he boldly asked for a pound of "those things." I doubt if Miss Matty had a whole pound in the shop, and, besides the unusual magnitude of the order, she was distressed with the idea of the indigestion they would produce, taken in such unlimited quantities. She looked up to remonstrate. Something of tender relaxation in his face struck home to her heart. She said, "It is—O sir! can you be Peter?" and trembled from head to foot. In a moment he was round the table and had her in his arms, sobbing the tearless cries of old age. I brought her a glass of wine, for indeed her colour had changed so as to alarm me and Mr. Peter too. He kept saying, "I have been too sudden for you, Matty—I have, my little girl."

I proposed that she should go at once up into the drawing-room and lie down on the sofa there. She looked wistfully at her brother, whose hand she had held tight, even when nearly fainting; but on his assuring her that he would not leave her, she allowed him to carry her upstairs.

I thought that the best I could do was to run and put the kettle on the fire for early tea, and then to attend to the shop, leaving the brother and sister to exchange some of the many thousand things they must have to say. I had also to break the news to Martha, who received it with a burst of tears which nearly infected me. She kept recovering herself to ask if I was sure it was indeed Miss Matty's brother, for I had mentioned that he had gray hair and she had always heard that he was a very handsome young man. Something of the same kind perplexed Miss Matty at tea-time, when

she was installed in the great easy chair opposite to Mr. Jenkyns's in order to gaze her fill. She could hardly drink for looking at him, and as for eating, that was out of the question.

5 "I suppose hot climates age people very quickly," said she almost to herself. "When you left Cranford you had not a gray hair in your head."

"But how many years ago is that?" said Mr. Peter, smiling.

10 "Ah true! yes, I suppose you and I are getting old. But still I did not think we were so very old! But white hair is very becoming to you, Peter," she continued—a little afraid lest she had hurt him by revealing how his appearance had impressed her.

15 "I suppose I forgot dates too, Matty, for what do you think I have brought for you from India? I have an India muslin gown and a pearl necklace for you somewhere in my chest at Portsmouth." He smiled as if amused at the idea of the incongruity of his

20 presents with the appearance of his sister; but this did not strike her all at once, while the elegance of the articles did. I could see that for a moment her imagination dwelt complacently on the idea of herself thus attired; and instinctively she put her hand up to her

25 throat—that little delicate throat which (as Miss Pole had told me) had been one of her youthful charms; but the hand met the touch of folds of soft muslin in which she always swathed up her chin, and the sensation recalled a sense of the unsuitableness of a pearl

30 necklace to her age. She said, "I'm afraid I'm too old; but it was very kind of you to think of it. They are just what I should have liked years ago—when I was young."

"So I thought, my little Matty. I remembered your
35 tastes; they were so like my dear mother's." At the mention of that name the brother and sister clasped each other's hands yet more fondly, and, although

they were perfectly silent, I fancied they might have something to say if they were unchecked by my presence, and I got up to arrange my room for Mr. Peter's occupation that night, intending myself to share Miss Matty's bed. But at my movement he started up.⁵ "I must go and settle about a room at the George. My carpet bag is there too."

"No!" said Miss Matty, in great distress—"you must not go; please, dear Peter—pray Mary—oh! you must not go!"¹⁰

She was so much agitated that we both promised everything she wished. Peter sat down again and gave her his hand, which for better security she held in both of hers, and I left the room to accomplish my arrangements.¹⁵

Long, long into the night, far, far into the morning, did Miss Matty and I talk. She had much to tell me of her brother's life and adventures, which he had communicated to her as they had sat alone. She said all was thoroughly clear to her; but I never quite understood the whole story; and when in after days I lost my awe of Mr. Peter enough to question him myself, he laughed at my curiosity, and told me stories that sounded so very much like Baron Munchausen's,¹ that I was sure he was making fun of me. What I²⁵ heard from Miss Matty was that he had been a volunteer at the siege of Rangoon;² had been taken prisoner by the Burmese; had somehow obtained favour and eventual freedom from knowing how to bleed the chief of the small tribe in some case of dangerous illness;³⁰ that on his release from years of captivity he had had his letters returned from England with the ominous word "Dead" marked upon them; and believing

¹ **Baron Munchausen**—The hero of a volume of travels, who meets with the most marvellous adventures.

² **siege of Rangoon**—In 1824. Rangoon is the capital of Lower Burma, India.

himself to be the last of his race, he had settled down as an indigo planter, and had proposed to spend the remainder of his life in the country to whose inhabitants and modes of life he had become habituated, when my letter had reached him, and with the odd vehemence which characterised him in age as it had done in youth, he had sold his land and all his possessions to the first purchaser, and come home to his poor old sister, who was more glad and rich than any princess when she looked at him. She talked me to sleep at last, and then I was awakened by a slight sound at the door, for which she begged my pardon as she crept penitently into bed; but it seems that when I could no longer confirm her belief that the long-lost was really here—under the same roof—she had begun to fear lest it was only a waking dream of hers; that there had never been a Peter sitting by her all that blessed evening—but that the real Peter lay dead far away beneath some wild sea-wave, or under some strange eastern tree. And so strong had this nervous feeling of hers become, that she was fain to get up and go and convince herself that he was really there by listening through the door to his even, regular breathing—I don't like to call it snoring, but I heard it myself through two closed doors—and by and by it soothed Miss Matty to sleep.

I don't believe Mr. Peter came home from India as rich as a nabob; he even considered himself poor, but neither he nor Miss Matty cared much about that. At any rate, he had enough to live upon "very genteelly" at Cranford; he and Miss Matty together. And a day or two after his arrival the shop was closed, while troops of little urchins gleefully awaited the shower of comfits and lozenges that came from time to time down upon their faces as they stood up-gazing at Miss Matty's drawing-room windows.

Occasionally Miss Matty would say to them (half-

hidden behind the curtains), "My dear children, don't make yourselves ill"; but a strong arm pulled her back, and a more rattling shower than ever succeeded. A part of the tea was sent in presents to the Cranford ladies; and some of it was distributed among the old⁵ people who remembered Mr. Peter in the days of his frolicsome youth. The India muslin gown was reserved for darling Flora Gordon (Miss Jessie Brown's daughter). The Gordons had been on the continent for the last few years, but were now expected to return very soon;¹⁰ and Miss Matty, in her sisterly pride, anticipated great delight in the joy of showing them Mr. Peter. The pearl necklace disappeared; and about that time many handsome and useful presents made their appearance in the households of Miss Pole and Mrs. Forrester;¹⁵ and some rare and delicate Indian ornaments graced the drawing-rooms of Mrs. Jamieson and Mrs. Fitz-Adam. I myself was not forgotten. Among other things, I had the handsomest bound and best edition of Dr. Johnson's¹ works that could be procured; and²⁰ dear Miss Matty, with tears in her eyes, begged me to consider it as a present from her sister as well as herself. In short, no one was forgotten; and, what was more, every one, however insignificant, who had shown kindness to Miss Matty at any time, was sure of Mr. Peter's²⁵ cordial regard.

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL [1811-1865].

MY GARDEN ACQUAINTANCE

From My Study Windows

THE return of the robin is commonly announced by the newspapers, like that of eminent or notorious people³⁰ to a watering-place, as the first authentic notification

¹ Dr. Johnson's works had been special favourites of Miss Jenkyns.

of spring. And such his appearance in the orchard and garden undoubtedly is. But, in spite of his name of migratory thrush, he stays with us all winter,¹ and I have seen him when the thermometer marked 15⁵ degrees below zero of Fahrenheit, armed impregnably within, like Emerson's Titmouse,² and as cheerful as he. The robin has a bad reputation among people who do not value themselves less for being fond of cherries. There is, I admit, a spice of vulgarity in him, and his¹⁰ song is rather of the Bloomfield sort,³ too largely ballasted with prose. His ethics⁴ are of the Poor Richard⁵ school, and the main chance which calls forth all his energy is altogether of the belly. He never has those fine intervals of lunacy into which his cousins, the cat-¹⁵bird and the mavis,⁶ are apt to fall. But for a' that, and twice as muckle 's a' that, I would not exchange him for all the cherries that ever came out of Asia Minor.⁷ With whatever faults, he has not wholly forfeited that superiority which belongs to the children²⁰ of nature. He has a finer taste in fruit than could be distilled from many successive committees of the Horticultural Society, and he eats with a relishing gulp not inferior to Dr. Johnson's.⁸ He feels and freely

¹ The robin rarely spends the winter in Canada, but remains throughout the year in the neighbourhood of Boston and New York.

² **Emerson's Titmouse**—The Chickadee or Titmouse was the subject of a poem by Emerson.

³ **the Bloomfield sort**—Robert Bloomfield (1766-1823), an English poet and shoemaker.

⁴ **ethics**—His theory of right conduct.

⁵ **Poor Richard**—*Poor Richard's Almanack*, published by Benjamin Franklin between 1732 and 1757, contained a series of maxims and precepts.

⁶ **mavis**—The European thrush.

⁷ **Asia Minor**—Cherries are said to have been imported originally from Cerasus, a town in Asia Minor. Hence the name cherry.

⁸ **Dr. Johnson**—Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

exercises his right of eminent domain. His is the earliest mess of green pease; his all the mulberries I had fancied mine. But if he gets also the lion's share of the raspberries, he is a great planter, and sows those wild ones in the woods that solace the pedestrian and⁵ give a momentary calm even to the jaded victims of the White Hills. He keeps a strict eye over one's fruit, and knows to a shade of purple when your grapes have cooked long enough in the sun. During the severe drought a few years ago, the robins wholly¹⁰ vanished from my garden. I neither saw nor heard one for three weeks. Meanwhile a small foreign grapevine, rather shy of bearing, seemed to find the dusty air congenial, and, dreaming perhaps of its sweet Argos¹ across the sea, decked itself with a score or so of¹⁵ fair bunches. I watched them from day to day till they should have secreted sugar enough from the sunbeams, and at last made up my mind that I would celebrate my vintage the next morning. But the robins too had somehow kept note of them. They²⁰ must have sent out spies, as did the Jews into the promised land,² before I was stirring. When I went with my basket, at least a dozen of these winged vintagers bustled out from among the leaves, and alighting on the nearest trees interchanged some shrill²⁵ remarks about me of a derogatory nature. They had fairly sacked the vine. Not Wellington's veterans made cleaner work of a Spanish town; not Federals or Confederates³ were ever more impartial in the confiscation of neutral chickens. I was keeping my grapes³⁰ a secret to surprise the fair Fidele with, but the robins made them a profounder secret to her than I had

¹ **Argos**—A city in Greece, used here for the whole country.

² **spies**, etc.—See Numbers xiii.

³ **Federals or Confederates**—Federals, the soldiers of the North; Confederates, the soldiers of the South in the American Civil War.

meant. The tattered remnant of a single bunch was all my harvest-home. How paltry it looked at the bottom of my basket, as if a humming-bird had laid her egg in an eagle's nest! I could not help laughing; and the robins seemed to join heartily in the merriment. There was a native grape-vine close by, blue with its less refined abundance, but my cunning thieves preferred the foreign flavour. Could I tax them with want of taste?

¹⁰ The robins are not good solo singers, but their chorus, as, like primitive fire-worshippers, they hail the return of light and warmth to the world, is unrivalled. There are a hundred singing like one. They are noisy enough then, and sing, as poets should, with no ¹⁵ afterthought. But when they come after cherries to the tree near my window, they muffle their voices, and their faint *pip, pip, pop!* sounds far away at the bottom of the garden, where they know I shall not suspect them of robbing the great black-walnut of its ²⁰ bitter-rinded store. They are feathered Pecksniffs,¹ to be sure, but then how brightly their breasts, that look rather shabby in the sunlight, shine in a rainy day against the dark green of the fringe-tree! After they have pinched and shaken all the life out of an ²⁵ earthworm, as Italian cooks pound all the spirit out of a steak, and then gulped him, they stand up in honest self-confidence, expand their red waistcoats with the virtuous air of a lobby member, and outface you with an eye that calmly challenges enquiry. “Do I look ³⁰ like a bird that knows the flavour of raw vermin? I throw myself upon a jury of my peers. Ask any robin if he ever ate anything less ascetic than the frugal berry of the juniper, and he will answer that his vow forbids him.” Can such an open bosom cover ³⁵ such depravity? Alas, yes! I have no doubt his breast

¹ **Pecksniff**—A notorious hypocrite in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

was redder at that very moment with the blood of my raspberries. On the whole, he is a doubtful friend in the garden. He makes his dessert of all kinds of berries, and is not averse from early pears. But when we remember how omnivorous he is, eating his⁵ own weight in an incredibly short time, and that Nature seems exhaustless in her invention of new insects hostile to vegetation, perhaps we may reckon that he does more good than harm. For my own part, I would rather have his cheerfulness and kind neighbourhood¹⁰ than many berries.

For his cousin, the catbird, I have a still warmer regard. Always a good singer, he sometimes nearly equals the brown thrush,¹ and has the merit of keeping up his music later in the evening than any bird of my¹⁵ familiar acquaintance. Ever since I can remember, a pair of them have built in a gigantic syringa, near our front door, and I have known the male to sing almost uninterruptedly during the evenings of early summer until twilight duskened into dark. They²⁰ differ greatly in vocal talent, but all have a delightful way of crooning over, and, as it were, rehearsing their song in an undertone, which makes their nearness always unobtrusive. Though there is the most trustworthy witness to the imitative propensity of this bird,²⁵ I have only once, during an intimacy of more than forty years, heard him indulge in it. In that case, the imitation was by no means so close as to deceive, but a free reproduction of the notes of some other birds, especially of the oriole, as a kind of variation of his³⁰ own song. The catbird is as shy as the robin is vulgarly familiar. Only when his nest or his fledglings are approached does he become noisy and almost aggressive. I have known him to station his young in a

¹ **brown thrush**—The brown thrush or brown thrasher, the catbird and the mocking-bird belong to the same family.

thick cornel-bush¹ on the edge of the raspberry-bed, after the fruit began to ripen, and feed them there for a week or more. In such cases he shows none of that conscious guilt which makes the robin contemptible.

⁵ On the contrary, he will maintain his post in the thicket and sharply scold the intruder who ventures to steal *his* berries. After all his claim is only for tithes, while the robin will bag your entire crop if he get a chance.

¹⁰ Dr. Watts's² statement that "birds in their little nests agree," like too many others intended to form the infant mind, is very far from being true. On the contrary, the most peaceful relation of the different species to each other is that of armed neutrality. They are
¹⁵ very jealous of neighbours. A few years ago, I was much interested in the housebuilding of a pair of summer yellow-birds.³ They had chosen a very pretty site near the top of a tall white lilac, within easy eye-shot of a chamber window. A very pleasant thing it was
²⁰ to see their little home growing with mutual help, to watch their industrious skill interrupted only by little flirts and snatches of endearment, frugally cut short by the common-sense of the tiny housewife. They had brought their work nearly to an end, and had already
²⁵ begun to line it with fern-down, the gathering of which demanded more distant journeys and longer absences. But, alas! the syringa, immemorial manor of the cat-birds, was not more than twenty feet away, and these "giddy neighbours" had, as it appeared, been all along
³⁰ jealously watchful, though silent, witnesses of what they deemed an intrusion of squatters. No sooner were the pretty mates fairly gone for a new load of lining, than

¹ **cornel-bush**—A small shrub.

² **Dr. Watts**—Isaac Watts (1674-1748), an English theologian and hymn writer.

³ **summer yellow-birds**—The common yellow warbler.

“To their unguarded nests these weasel Scots
Came stealing.”

Silently they flew back and forth, each giving a vengeful dab at the nest in passing. They did not fall to and⁵ deliberately destroy it, for they might have been caught at their mischief. As it was, whenever the yellow-birds came back, their enemies were hidden in their own sight-proof bush. Several times their unconscious victims repaired damages, but at length, after¹⁰ counsel taken together, they gave it up. Perhaps, like other unlettered folk, they came to the conclusion that the Devil was in it, and yielded to the invisible persecutions of witchcraft.

The robins, by constant attacks and annoyances,¹⁵ have succeeded in driving off the blue-jays who used to build in our pines, their gay colours and quaint noisy ways making them welcome and amusing neighbours. I once had the chance of doing a kindness to a household of them, which they received with very friendly con-²⁰descension. I had had my eye for some time upon a nest, and was puzzled by a constant fluttering of what seemed full-grown wings in it whenever I drew nigh. At last I climbed the tree, in spite of angry protests from the old birds against my intrusion. The mystery²⁵ had a very simple solution. In building the nest, a long piece of packthread had been somewhat loosely woven in. Three of the young had contrived to entangle themselves in it, and had become full grown without being able to launch themselves upon the air.³⁰ One was unharmed; another had so tightly twisted the cord about its shank that one foot was curled up and seemed paralysed; the third, in its struggles to escape, had sawn through the flesh of the thigh and so much harmed itself that I thought it humane to put³⁵ an end to its misery. When I took out my knife to cut their hempen bonds, the heads of the family seemed

to divine my friendly intent. Suddenly ceasing their cries and threats, they perched quietly within reach of my hand and watched me in my work of manumission.¹ This, owing to the fluttering terror of the
⁵ prisoners, was an affair of some delicacy; but ere long I was rewarded by seeing one of them fly away to a neighbouring tree, while the cripple, making a parachute of his wings, came lightly to the ground, and hopped off as well as he could with one leg, obsequiously
¹⁰ waited on by his elders. A week later I had the satisfaction of meeting him in the pine-walk, in good spirits, and already so far recovered as to be able to balance himself with the lame foot. I have no doubt that in his old age he accounted for his lameness by some hand-
¹⁵ some story of a wound received at the famous battle of the Pines, when our tribe, overcome by numbers, was driven from its ancient camping-ground. Of late years the jays have visited us only at intervals; and in winter their bright plumage, set off by the snow,
²⁰ and their cheerful cry, are specially welcome. They would have furnished Æsop with a fable, for the feathered crest in which they seem to take so much satisfaction is often their fatal snare. Country boys make a hole with their finger in the snow-crust just large
²⁵ enough to admit the jay's head, and, hollowing it out somewhat beneath, bait it with a few kernels of corn. The crest slips easily into the trap, but refuses to be pulled out again, and he who came to feast remains a prey.

³⁰ Twice have the crow-blackbirds attempted a settlement in my pines, and twice have the robins, who claim a right of pre-emption, so successfully played the part of border-ruffians as to drive them away,—to my great regret, for they are the best substitute we have for
³⁵ rooks. At Shady Hill (now, alas! empty of its so long loved household) they build by hundreds, and nothing

¹ **manumission**—Liberation.

can be more cheery than their creaking clatter (like a convention of old-fashioned tavern-signs) as they gather at evening to debate in mass meeting their windy politics, or to gossip at their tent-doors over the events of the day. Their port is grave, and their stalk⁵ across the turf as martial as that of a second-rate ghost in Hamlet. They never meddled with my corn, so far as I could discover.

For a few years I had crows, but their nests are an irresistible bait for boys, and their settlement was¹⁰ broken up. They grew so wonted as to throw off a great part of their shyness, and to tolerate my near approach. One very hot day I stood for some time within twenty feet of a mother and three children, who sat on an elm bough over my head, gasping in the sultry air, and holding their wings half-spread for cool-¹⁵ness. All birds during the pairing season become more or less sentimental, and murmur soft nothings in a tone very unlike the grinding organ repetition and loudness of their habitual song. The crow is very²⁰ comical as a lover, and to hear him trying to soften his croak to the proper Saint Preux¹ standard has something the effect of a Mississippi boatman quoting Tennyson. Yet there are few things to my ear more melodious than his caw of a clear winter morning as it²⁵ drops to you filtered through five hundred fathoms of crisp blue air. The hostility of all smaller birds makes the moral character of the crow, for all his deaconlike demeanour and garb, somewhat questionable. He could never sally forth without insult. The golden³⁰ robins, especially, would chase him as far as I could follow with my eye, making him duck clumsily to avoid their importunate bills. I do not believe, however, that he robbed any nests hereabouts, for the refuse of the gas-works, which, in our free-and-easy community,³⁵

¹ **Saint Preux**—A character who plays the part of a lover in one of Rousseau's novels.

is allowed to poison the river, supplied him with dead alewives¹ in abundance. I used to watch him making his periodical visits to the salt marshes and coming back with a fish in his beak to his young savages, who,⁵ no doubt, like it in that condition which makes it savoury to the Kanakas² and other corvine³ races of men.

Orioles are in great plenty with me. I have seen seven males flashing about the garden at once. A¹⁰ merry crew of them swing their hammocks from the pendulous boughs. During one of these latter years, when the canker-worms stripped our elms as bare as winter, these birds went to the trouble of rebuilding their unroofed nests, and chose for the purpose trees¹⁵ which are safe from those swarming vandals, such as the ash and the button-wood. One year a pair (disturbed, I suppose, elsewhere) built a second nest in an elm, within a few yards of the house. My friend, Edward E. Hale,⁴ told me once that the oriole rejected²⁰ from his web all strands of brilliant colour, and I thought it a striking example of that instinct of concealment noticeable in many birds, though it should seem in this instance that the nest was amply protected by its position from all marauders but owls and squirrels.²⁵ Last year, however, I had the fullest proof that Mr. Hale was mistaken. A pair of orioles built on the lowest trailer of a weeping elm, which hung within ten feet of our drawing-room window, and so low that I could reach it from the ground. The nest was wholly³⁰ woven and felted with ravellings of woollen carpet in which scarlet predominated. Would the same thing have happened in the woods? Or did the nearness of

¹ **alewives**—Fish resembling herrings.

² **Kanakas**—The original inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands. They are small in stature and dark skinned.

³ **corvine**—Crow-like.

⁴ **Edward E. Hale**—An American clergyman and author.

a human dwelling perhaps give the birds a greater feeling of security? They are very bold, by the way, in quest of cordage, and I have often watched them stripping the fibrous bark from a honeysuckle growing over the very door. But, indeed, all my birds look upon me⁵ as if I were a mere tenant at will, and they were landlords. With shame I confess it, I have been bullied even by a humming-bird. This spring, as I was cleansing a pear-tree of its lichens, one of these zigzagging blurs came purring towards me, couching his long bill¹⁰ like a lance, his throat sparkling with angry fire, to warn me off from a Missouri-currant whose honey he was sipping. And many a time he has driven me out of a flower-bed. This summer, by the way, a pair of these winged emeralds fastened their mossy acorn-cup¹⁵ upon a bough of the same elm which the orioles had enlivened the year before. We watched all their proceedings from the window through an opera-glass, and saw their two nestlings grow from black needles with a tuft of down at the lower end, till they whirled away on²⁰ their first short experimental flights. They became strong of wing in a surprisingly short time, and I never saw them or the male bird after, though the female was regular as usual in her visits to our petunias and verbenas. I do not think it ground enough for a generali-²⁵sation, but in the many times when I watched the old birds feeding their young, the mother always alighted, while the father as uniformly remained upon the wing.

The bobolinks are generally chance visitors, tinkling through the garden in blossoming time, but this year,³⁰ owing to the long rains early in the season, their favourite meadows were flooded, and they were driven to the upland. So I had a pair of them domiciled in my grass-field. The male used to perch in an apple-tree, then in full bloom, and, while I stood perfectly still³⁵ close by, he would circle away, quivering round the entire field of five acres, with no break in his song, and

settle down again among the blossoms, to be hurried away almost immediately by a new rapture of music. He had the volubility of an Italian charlatan¹ at a fair, and, like him, appeared to be proclaiming the merits
 5 of some quack remedy. *Opodeldoc-opodeldoc-try-Doctor-Lincoln's-opodeldoc!* he seemed to repeat over and over again, with a rapidity that would have distanced the deftest-tongued Figaro² that ever rattled.

The bobolinks build in considerable numbers in a
 10 meadow within a quarter of a mile of us. A houseless lane passes through the midst of their camp, and in clear westerly weather, at the right season, one may hear a score of them singing at once. When they are breeding, if I chance to pass, one of the male birds
 15 always accompanies me like a constable, flitting from post to post of the rail fence, with a short note of reproof continually repeated, till I am fairly out of the neighbourhood. Then he will swing away into the air and run down the wind, gurgling music without
 20 stint over the unheeding tussocks of meadow-grass and dark clumps of bulrushes that mark his domain.

We have no bird whose song will match the nightingale's in compass, none whose note is so rich as that of the European blackbird; but for mere rapture I have
 25 never heard the bobolink's rival. But his opera-season is a short one. The ground and tree-sparrows are our most constant performers. It is now late in August, and one of the latter sings every day and all day long in the garden. Till within a fortnight, a pair of indigo-
 30 birds would keep up their lively *duo* for an hour together. While I write, I hear an oriole gay as in June, and the plaintive *may-be* of the goldfinch tells me he is stealing my lettuce-seeds. I know not what the experience of others may have been, but the only bird I have

¹ charlatan—Mountebank.

² Figaro—A character in various French comedies, a type of cunning and ingenuity.

ever heard sing in the night has been the chip-bird.¹ I should say he sang about as often during the darkness as cocks crow. One can hardly help fancying that he sings in his dreams.

5

“ Father of light, what sunnie seed,
What glance of day hast thou confined
Into this bird? To all the breed
This busie ray thou hast assigned;
Their magnetism works all night,
And dreams of Paradise and light.”

10

On second thought, I remember to have heard the cuckoo strike the hours nearly all night with the regularity of a Swiss clock.

The dead limbs of our elms, which I spare to that end, bring us the flicker² every summer, and almost daily¹⁵ I hear his wild scream and laugh close at hand, himself invisible. He is a shy bird, but a few days ago I had the satisfaction of studying him through the blinds as he sat on a tree within a few feet of me. Seen so near and at rest, he makes good his claim to the title of²⁰ pigeon-woodpecker. Lumberers have a notion that he is harmful to timber, digging little holes through the bark to encourage the settlement of insects. The regular rings of such perforations which one may see in almost any apple-orchard seem to give some prob-²⁵ ability to this theory. Almost every season a solitary quail visits us, and, unseen among the currant-bushes, calls *Bob White, Bob White*, as if he were playing at hide-and-seek with that imaginary being. A rarer visitant is the turtle-dove, whose pleasant coo (some-³⁰ thing like the muffled crow of a cock from a coop covered with snow) I have sometimes heard, and whom I once had the good luck to see close by me in the mulberry-tree. The wild-pigeon, once numerous, I have not seen for many years. Of savage birds, a hen-hawk³⁵

¹ chip-bird—The chipping sparrow.

² flicker—The highhole.

now and then quarters himself upon us for a few days sitting sluggish in a tree after a surfeit of poultry. One of them once offered me a near shot from my study-window one drizzly day for several hours. But it was ⁵ Sunday, and I gave him the benefit of its gracious truce of God.

Certain birds have disappeared from our neighbourhood within my memory. I remember when the whip-poorwill could be heard in Sweet Auburn. The night-¹⁰ hawk, once common, is now rare. The brown thrush has moved farther up country. For years I have not seen or heard any of the larger owls, whose hooting was one of my boyish terrors. The cliff-swallow, strange emigrant, that eastward takes his way, has come and ¹⁵ gone again in my time. The bank-swallows, well-nigh innumerable during my boyhood, no longer frequent the crumbly cliff of the gravel-pit by the river. The barn-swallows, which once swarmed in our barn, flashing through the dusty sunstreaks of the mow, have been ²⁰ gone these many years. My father would lead me out to see them gather on the roof, and take counsel before their yearly migration, as Mr. White¹ used to see them at Selborne. *Eheu, fugaces!*² Thank fortune, the swift still glues his nest, and rolls his distant thunders night ²⁵ and day in the wide-throated chimneys, still sprinkles the evening air with his merry twittering. The populous heronry in Fresh Pond meadows has been well-nigh broken up, but still a pair or two haunt the old home, as the gypsies of Ellangowan³ their ruined huts, and ³⁰ every evening fly over us riverwards, clearing their throats with a hoarse hawk as they go, and, in cloudy weather, scarce higher than the tops of the chimneys.

¹ **White**—Gilbert White (1720-1793), an English naturalist, born at Selborne, Hampshire, England.

² **Eheu, fugaces**—Part of a line from Horace, "Alas! the fleeting years slip away."

³ **Ellangowan**—A castle and estate in Scott's *Guy Manner-
ing*.

Sometimes I have known one to alight in one of our trees, though for what purpose I never could divine. Kingfishers have sometimes puzzled me in the same way, perched at high noon in a pine, springing their watchman's rattle when they flitted away from my curiosity,⁵ and seeming to shove their top-heavy heads along as a man does a wheel-barrow.

Some birds have left us, I suppose, because the country is growing less wild. I once found a summer duck's nest within a quarter of a mile of our house, but such a *trouvaille*¹ would be impossible now as Kidd's treasure.² And yet the mere taming of the neighbourhood does not quite satisfy me as an explanation. Twenty years ago, on my way to bathe in the river, I saw every day a brace of woodcock, on the miry edge of¹⁵ a spring within a few rods of a house, and constantly visited by thirsty cows. There was no growth of any kind to conceal them, and yet these ordinarily shy birds were almost as indifferent to my passing as common poultry would have been. Since bird-nesting has²⁰ become scientific, and dignified itself as oölogy, that, no doubt, is partly to blame for some of our losses. But some old friends are constant. Wilson's³ thrush comes every year to remind me of that most poetic of ornithologists. He flits before me through the pine-walk²⁵ like the very genius of solitude. A pair of pewees have built immemorially on a jutting brick in the arched entrance to the ice-house. Always on the same brick, and never more than a single pair, though two broods of five each are raised there every summer. How do³⁰ they settle their claim to the homestead? By what

¹ *trouvaille*—A lucky find.

² *Kidd's treasure*—Captain Kidd, a notorious pirate, hanged in London 1701. Part of his treasure was buried on Gardiner's Island, New York, and is popularly supposed never to have been recovered.

³ *Wilson*—A Scottish American ornithologist, born 1766, died 1813.

right of primogeniture? Once the children of a man employed about the place *oölogized* the nest,¹ and the pewees left us for a year or two. I felt towards those boys as the messmates of the Ancient Mariner² did towards him after he had shot the albatross. But the pewees came back at last, and one of them is now on his wonted perch, so near my window that I can hear the click of his bill as he snaps a fly on the wing with the unerring precision a stately Trasteverina³ shows in the capture of her smaller deer. The pewee is the first bird to pipe up in the morning; and during the early summer he preludes his matutinal ejaculation of *pewee* with a slender whistle, unheard at any other time. He saddens with the season, and, as summer declines, he changes his note *ehou, pewee!* as if in lamentation. Had he been an Italian bird, Ovid⁴ would have had a plaintive tale to tell about him. He is so familiar as often to pursue a fly through the open window into my library.

There is something inexpressibly dear to me in these old friendships of a lifetime. There is scarce a tree of mine but has had, at some time or other, a happy homestead among its boughs, to which I cannot say,

“Many light hearts and wings,
Which now be dead, lodged in thy living bowers.”

My walk under the pines would lose half its summer charm were I to miss that shy anchorite, the Wilson's thrush, nor hear in haying time the metallic ring of his song, that justifies his rustic name of *scythe-whet*. I protect my game as jealously as an English squire. If any body had *oölogized* a certain cuckoo's nest I know

¹ *oölogized the nest*—Stole the eggs.

² *Ancient Mariner*—The passage of Coleridge's poem expressing this feeling reads thus:—

“Ah, wretch!” said they, “the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow.”

³ *Trasteverina*—From *trans Tiber*,—a woman of the workmen's quarter in Rome.

⁴ *Ovid*—A Roman poet (43 B.C.-18 A.D.)

of (I have a pair in my garden every year), it would have left me a sore place in my mind for weeks. I love to bring these aborigines back to the mansuetude¹ they showed to the early voyagers, and before (forgive the involuntary pun) they had grown accustomed to man⁵ and knew his savage ways. And they repay your kindness with a sweet familiarity too delicate ever to breed contempt. I have made a Penn-treaty² with them, preferring that to the Puritan way with the natives, which converted them to a little Hebraism³ and a great¹⁰ deal of Medford⁴ rum. If they will not come near enough to me (as most of them will), I bring them close with an opera-glass—a much better weapon than a gun. I would not, if I could, convert them from their pretty pagan ways. The only ones I sometimes have¹⁵ savage doubts about is the red squirrel. I *think* he oölogizes. I *know* he eats cherries (we counted five of them at one time in a single tree, the stones pattering down like the sparse hail that preludes a storm), and that he gnaws off the small end of pears to get at the²⁰ seeds. He steals the corn from under the noses of my poultry. But what would you have? He will come down upon the limb of the tree I am lying under till he is within a yard of me. He and his mate will scurry up and down the great black-walnut for my diversion,²⁵ chattering like monkeys. Can I sign his death-warrant who has tolerated me about his grounds so long? Not I. Let them steal, and welcome. I am sure I should, had I had the same bringing up and the same temptation. As for the birds, I do not believe there is one of³⁰ them but does more good than harm; and of how many featherless bipeds can this be said?

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL [1819-1891].

¹ **mansuetude**—Tameless.

² **Penn-treaty**—Penn made a treaty of friendship with the Indians in 1700.

³ **Hebraism**—Morality.

⁴ **Medford**—A town in Massachusetts.

MY UNCLE IN INDIA

From Backlog Studies

It happened, or rather, to tell the truth, it was contrived,—for I have waited too long for things to turn up to have much faith in “happen”—that we who have sat by this hearth-stone before should all be
5 together on Christmas Eve. There was a splendid backlog of hickory just beginning to burn with a glow that promised to grow more fiery till long past midnight, which would have needed no apology in a loggers’ camp,—not so much as the religion of which a
10 lady (in a city which shall be nameless) said, “If you must have a religion this one will do nicely.”

There was not much conversation, as is apt to be the case when people come together who have a great deal to say, and are intimate enough to permit the freedom
15 of silence. It was Mandeville who suggested that we read something, and the Young Lady, who was in a mood to enjoy her own thoughts, said, “Do.” And finally it came about that the Fire-Tender, without more resistance to the urging than was becoming, went
20 to his library, and returned with a manuscript, from which he read the story of

MY UNCLE IN INDIA

Not that it is my uncle, let me explain. It is Polly’s uncle, as I very well know, from the many times she
25 has thrown him up to me, and is liable to do so at any moment. Having small expectations myself, and having wedded Polly when they were smaller, I have come to feel the full force, the crushing weight, of her lightest remark about “My Uncle in India.” The words as I
30 write them convey no idea of the tone in which they fall upon my ears. I think it is the only fault of that estimable woman, that she has an uncle in India, and does not let him quietly remain there. I feel quite

sure that if I had an uncle in Botany Bay,¹ I should never, never throw him up to Polly in the way mentioned. If there is any jar in our quiet life, he is the cause of it; all along of possible "expectations" on the one side calculated to overawe the other side not having⁵ expectations. And yet I know that if her uncle in India were this night to roll a barrel of "India's golden sands," as I feel that he any moment may do, into our sitting-room, at Polly's feet, that charming wife, who is more generous than the month of May, and who has¹⁰ no thought but for my comfort in two worlds, would straightway make it over to me, to have and to hold, if I could lift it, for ever and for ever. And that makes it more inexplicable that she, being a woman, will continue to mention him in the way she does.¹⁵

In a large and general way I regard uncles as not out of place in this transitory state of existence. They stand for a great many possible advantages. They are liable to "tip" you at school, they are resources in vacation, they come grandly in play about the holidays,²⁰ at which season my heart always did warm towards them with lively expectations, which were often turned into golden solidities; and then there is always the prospect, sad to a sensitive mind, that uncles are mortal, and, in their timely taking off, may prove as generous²⁵ in the will as they were in the deed. And there is always this redeeming possibility in a niggardly uncle. Still there must be something wrong in the character of the uncle, *per se*,¹ or all history would not agree that nepotism² is such a dreadful thing.³⁰

But, to return from this unnecessary digression, I am reminded that the charioteer of the patient year has brought round the holiday time. It has been a

¹ **Botany Bay**—An inlet near Sydney, New South Wales, used as a penal settlement in 1787-88.

² **per se**—In itself.

³ **nepotism**—Favouritism extended towards nephews and other relations.

growing year, as most years are. It is very pleasant to see how the shrubs in our little patch of ground widen and thicken and bloom at the right time, and to know that the great trees have added a layer to
5 their trunks. To be sure, our garden,—which I planted under Polly's directions, with seeds that must have been patented, and I forgot to buy the right of, for they are mostly still waiting the final resurrection,—gave evidence that it shared in the misfortune of the
10 Fall, and was never an Eden from which one would have required to have been driven. It was the easiest garden to keep the neighbour's pigs and hens out of I ever saw. If its increase was small, its temptations were smaller, and that is no little recommendation in this
15 world of temptations. But, as a general thing, everything has grown except our house. That little cottage, over which Polly presides with grace enough to adorn a palace, is still small outside and smaller inside; and if it has an air of comfort and neatness, and its rooms
20 are cosy and sunny by day and cheerful by night, and it is bursting with books, and not unattractive with modest pictures on the wall, which we think do well enough until my uncle—(but never mind my uncle now),—and if, in the long winter evenings, when the
25 largest lamp is lit, and the chestnuts glow in embers, and the kid turns on the spit, and the house-plants are green and flowering, and the ivy glistens in the fire-light, and Polly sits with that contented, far-away look in her eyes that I like to see, her fingers busy upon one
30 of those cruel mysteries which have delighted the sex since Penelope,¹ and I read in one of my fascinating law-books, or perhaps regale ourselves with a taste of Montaigne,²—if all this is true, there are times when the

¹ **Penelope**—The wife of Ulysses. During her husband's absence she was engaged in weaving a robe for the funeral canopy of Laertes, the father of Ulysses.

² **Montaigne**—A celebrated French essayist, 1533-1592.

cottage seems small; though I can never find that Polly thinks so, except when she sometimes says that she does not know where she should bestow her uncle in it, if he should suddenly come back from India.

There it is again. I sometimes think that my wife ⁵ believes her uncle in India to be as large as two ordinary men; and if her ideas of him are any gauge of the reality there is no place in the town large enough for him except the Town Hall. She probably expects him to come with his bungalow,¹ and his sedan, and his palan-¹⁰ quin, and his elephants, and his retinue of servants, and his principalities, and his powers, and his ha—— (no, not that), and his chow-chow, and his—I scarcely know what besides.

Christmas Eve was a shiny cold night, a creaking ¹⁵ cold night, a placid, calm, swingeing² cold night. Outdoors had gone into a general state of crystallisation. The snow-fields were like the vast Arctic ice-fields that Kane³ looked on, and lay sparkling under the moonlight, crisp and Christmasy, and all the crystals on the trees ²⁰ and bushes hung glistening, as if ready, at a breath of air, to break out into metallic ringing, like a million silver joy-bells. I mentioned the conceit⁴ to Polly, as we stood at the window, and she said it reminded her of Jean Paul.⁵ She is a woman of most remarkable ²⁵ discernment.

Christmas is a great festival at our house in a small way. Among the many delightful customs we did not inherit from our Pilgrim Fathers, there is none so pleasant as that of giving presents at this season. It is the ³⁰ most exciting time of the year. No one is too rich to

¹ **bungalow**—In India a low-roofed cottage.

² **swingeing**—Stinging.

³ **Kane**—An American scientist and Arctic explorer.

⁴ **conceit**—An ingenious fancy.

⁵ **Jean Paul**—Jean Paul Richter, 1763-1825, a German novelist and writer, noted for his original sayings.

receive something, and no one too poor to give a trifle. And in the act of giving and receiving these tokens of regard, all the world is kin for once, and brighter for this transient glow of generosity. Delightful custom!

- ⁵ Hard is the lot of childhood that knows nothing of the visits of Kriss Kringle,¹ or the stockings hung by the chimney at night; and cheerless is any age that is not brightened by some Christmas gift, however humble. What a mystery of preparation there is in the preceding days, what planning and plotting of surprises!
- ¹⁰ Polly and I keep up the custom in our simple way, and great is the perplexity to express the greatest amount of affection with a limited outlay. For the excellence of a gift lies in its appropriateness rather than in its value.
- ¹⁵ As we stood by the window that night, we wondered what we should receive this year, and indulged in I know not what little hypocrisies and deceptions.

“I wish,” said Polly, “that my uncle in India would send me a camel’s-hair shawl, or a string of pearls, each as big as the end of my thumb.”

“Or a white cow, which would give golden milk, that would make butter worth seventy-five cents a pound,” I added, as we drew the curtains, and turned our chairs before the open fire.

- ²⁵ It is our custom on every Christmas Eve—as I believe I have somewhere said, or if I have not, I say it again, as the member from Erin might remark—to read one of Dickens’s Christmas stories. And this night, after punching the fire until it sent showers of sparks up the chimney, I read the opening chapter of “Mrs. Lirriper’s Lodgings,” in my best manner, and handed the book to Polly to continue; for I do not so much relish reading aloud the succeeding stories of Mr. Dickens’s annual budget, since he wrote them, as men go to war in these
- ³⁵ days, by substitute. And Polly read on, in her melodi-

¹ **Kriss Kringle**—Here, Santa Claus. Kriss Kringle is in reality the Christ Child from the German *Christ-Kindlein*.

ous voice, which is always as sweet to me as the Wasser-flute of Schubert,¹ which she often plays at twilight; and I looked into the fire unconsciously constructing stories of my own out of the embers. And her voice still went on in a sort of running accompaniment to my⁵ airy or fiery fancies.

“Sleep?” said Polly, stopping, with what seemed to me a sort of crash, in which all the castles tumbled into ashes.

“Not in the least,” I answered brightly; “never¹⁰ heard anything more agreeable.” And the reading flowed on and on and on, and I looked steadily into the fire, the fire, fire, fi——

Suddenly the door opened, and into our cosy parlour walked the most venerable person I ever laid eyes on,¹⁵ who saluted me with great dignity. Summer seemed to have burst into the room, and I was conscious of a puff of Oriental airs, and a delightful, languid tranquillity. I was not surprised that the figure before me was clad in full turban, baggy drawers, and a long loose²⁰ robe, girt about the middle with a rich shawl. Followed him a swart attendant, who hastened to spread a rug upon which my visitor sat down, with great gravity, as I am informed they do in farthest India. The slave then filled the bowl of a long-stemmed chibouk,² and, handing it to his master, retired behind him and began²⁵ to fan him with the most prodigious palm-leaf I ever saw. Soon the fumes of the delicate tobacco of Persia pervaded the room, like some costly aroma which you cannot buy, now the entertainment of the Arabian Nights is discontinued.³⁰

Looking through the window I saw, if I saw anything, a palanquin at our door, and attendant on it four dusky, half-naked bearers who did not seem to fancy the splen-

¹ **Schubert**—An Austrian musician and composer, 1797-1828.

² **chibouk**—A Turkish pipe.

dour of the night, for they jumped about on the snow crust, and I could see them shiver and shake in the keen air. Oho! thought I, this, then, is my uncle from India!

5 "Yes, it is," now spoke my visitor extraordinary, in a gruff, harsh voice.

"I think I have heard Polly speak of you," I rejoined in an attempt to be civil, for I didn't like his face any better than I did his voice,—a red, fiery, irascible kind
10 of face.

"Yes. I've come over to—O Lord,—quick, Jamsetzee, lift up that foot,—take care. There, Mr. Trimings, if that's your name, get me a glass of brandy, stiff."

I got him our little apothecary-labelled bottle, and
15 poured out enough to preserve a whole can of peaches. My uncle took it down without a wink, as if it had been water, and seemed relieved. It was a very pleasant uncle to have at our fireside on Christmas Eve, I felt.

At a motion from my uncle, Jamsetzee handed me a
20 parcel which I saw was directed to Polly, which I untied, and lo! the most wonderful camel's-hair shawl that ever was, so fine that I immediately drew it through my finger-ring, and so large that I saw it would entirely cover our little room if I spread it out; a dingy red
25 colour, but splendid in appearance from the little white hieroglyphic worked in one corner, which is always worn outside, to show that it cost nobody knows how many thousands of dollars.

"A Christmas trifle for Polly. I have come home—
30 as I was saying when that confounded twinge took me—to settle down; and I intend to make Polly my heir, and live at my ease and enjoy life. Move that leg a little, Jamsetzee."

I meekly replied that I had no doubt Polly would
35 be delighted to see her dear uncle, and as for inheriting, if it came to that, I didn't know any one with a greater capacity for that than she.

"That depends," said the gruff old smoker, "how I like ye. A fortune scraped up in forty years in Ingy, ain't to be thrown away in a minute. But what a house this is to live in!" the uncomfortable old relative went on, throwing a contemptuous glance round the humble cottage. "Is this all of it?"⁵

"In the winter it is all of it," I said flushing up; "but in the summer when the doors and windows are open, it is as large as anybody's house. And," I went on with some warmth, "it was large enough just before you came in, and pleasant enough. And besides," I said, rising into indignation, "you cannot get anything much better in this city short of eight hundred dollars a year, payable first days of January, April, July and October, in advance, and my salary—"¹⁵

"Hang your salary, and confound your impudence and your seven-by-nine hovel. Do you think *you* have anything to say about the use of *my* money, scraped up in forty years in Ingy? THINGS HAVE GOT TO BE CHANGED!" he burst out, in a voice that rattled²⁰ the glasses on the sideboard.

I should think they were. Even as I looked into the little fireplace it enlarged, and there was an enormous grate, level with the floor, glowing with sea-coal, and a magnificent mantel carved in oak, old and brown;²⁵ and over it hung a landscape, wide, deep, summer in the foreground with all the gorgeous colourings of the tropics, and beyond hills of blue and far mountains lying in rosy light. I held my breath as I looked down the marvellous perspective. Looking round for³⁰ a second, I caught a glimpse of a Hindoo at each window who vanished as if they had been whisked off by enchantment; and the close walls that shut us in fled away. Had cohesion and gravitation given out? Was it the "Great Consummation" of the 18-? It was all like³⁵ the swift transformation of a dream, and I pinched

my arm to make sure that I was not the subject of some diablerie.¹

The little house was gone; but that I scarcely minded, for I had suddenly come into possession of my wife's
5 castle in Spain.² I sat in a spacious, lofty apartment, furnished with a princely magnificence. Rare pictures adorned the walls, statues looked down from deep niches, and over both the dark ivy of England ran and drooped in graceful luxuriance. Upon the heavy
10 tables were costly, illuminated volumes; luxurious chairs and ottomans invited to easy rest; and upon the ceiling Aurora led forth all the flower-strewing daughters of the dawn in brilliant frescoes. Through the open doors my eyes wandered into magnificent
15 apartment after apartment. There to the south, through folding doors, was the splendid library, with groined roof, coloured light streaming in through painted windows, high shelves stowed with books, old armour hanging on the walls, great carved oaken
20 chairs about a solid oaken table, and beyond a conservatory of flowers and plants with a fountain springing in the centre, the splashing of whose waters I could hear. Through the open windows I looked upon a lawn, green with close-shaven turf, set with ancient
25 trees, and variegated with patterns of summer plants in bloom. It was the month of June, and the smell of roses was in the air.

I might have thought it only a freak of my fancy, but there by the fireplace sat a stout, red-faced, puffy-
30 looking man, in the ordinary dress of an English gentleman, whom I had no difficulty in recognising as my uncle from India.

“One wants a fire every day in the year in this con-

¹ **diablerie**—Mischief.

² **castle in Spain**—Castle in the air. The French speak of a castle in the air as a *château d'Espagne*, or castle in Spain, because Spain has no châteaux.

founded climate," remarked that amiable old person, addressing no one in particular.

I had it on my lips to suggest that I trusted the day would come when he would have heat enough to satisfy him, in permanent supply. I wish now that I had. ⁵

I think things *had* changed. For now into this apartment, full of the morning sunshine, came sweeping with the air of a countess born, and a maid of honour bred, and a queen in expectancy, my Polly, stepping with that lofty grace which I always knew she possessed, ¹⁰ but which she never had space to exhibit in our little cottage, dressed with that elegance and richness which I should not have deemed possible to the most Dutch duchess that ever lived, and, giving me a complacent nod of recognition, approached her uncle, and said, in ¹⁵ her smiling, cheery way, "How is the dear uncle this morning?" and as she spoke she actually bent down and kissed his horrid old cheek, red-hot with curry and brandy and all the biting pickles that I can neither eat nor name,—kissed him and I did not turn into stone. ²⁰

"Comfortable as the weather will permit, my darling;"—and again I did not turn into stone.

"Wouldn't uncle like to take a drive this charming morning?" Polly asked.

Uncle finally grunted out his willingness, and Polly ²⁵ swept away again to prepare for the drive, taking no more notice of me than if I had been a poor assistant office lawyer on a salary. And soon the carriage was at the door, and my uncle, bundled up like a mummy, and the charming Polly drove gaily away. ³⁰

How pleasant it is to be married rich, I thought, as I arose and strolled into the library, where everything was elegant and prim and neat, with no scraps of paper and piles of newspapers or evidences of literary sloven- ³⁵ liness on the table, and no books in attractive disorder, and where I seemed to see the legend staring at me from the walls, "No Smoking." So I uneasily lounged

out of the house. And a magnificent house it was, a palace rather, that seemed to frown upon and bully insignificant me with its splendour, as I walked away from it towards town.

⁵ And why town? There was no use of doing anything at the dingy old office. Eight hundred dollars a year! It wouldn't keep Polly in gloves, let alone dressing her for *one* of those fashionable entertainments to which we went night after night. And so, after a weary day
¹⁰ with nothing in it, I went home to dinner, to find my uncle quite chirruped up with his drive, and Polly regnant, sublimely engrossed in her new world of splendour, a dazzling object of admiration to me, but attentive and even tender to that hypochondriacal, gouty,
¹⁵ old subject from India.

Yes, a magnificent dinner, with no end of servants who seemed to know that I couldn't have paid the wages of one of them, and plate and courses endless. I say, a miserable dinner, on the edge of which I seemed
²⁰ to sit by permission of somebody, like an invited poor relation, who wishes he had sent a regret, and longing for some of those nice little dishes that Polly used to set before me with beaming face, in the dear old days.

And after dinner, and proper attention to the comfort
²⁵ for the night of our benefactor, there was the Blibgim's party. No long, confidential interviews, as heretofore, as to what she should wear and what I should wear, and whether it would do to wear again. And Polly went in one coach, and I in another. No crowding
³⁰ into the hired hack, with all the delightful care about tumbling dresses, and getting there in good order; and no coming home together to our cosy cottage, in a pleasant, excited state of "flutteration," and sitting down to talk it all over, and "Wasn't it nice?" and
³⁵ "Did I look as well as anybody?" and "Of course you did to me," and all that nonsense. We lived in a grand way now, and had our separate establishments and

separate plans, and I used to think that a real separation couldn't make matters much different. Not that Polly meant to be any different, or was, at heart; but, you know, she was so much absorbed in her new life of splendour, and perhaps I was a little old-fashioned. ⁵

I don't wonder at it now, as I look back. There was an army of dressmakers to see, and a world of shopping to do, and a houseful of servants to manage, and all the afternoon for calls, and her dear, dear friend, with the artless manners and merry heart of a girl, and the ¹⁰ dignity and grace of a noble woman,—the dear friend who lived in the house of the Seven Gables, to consult about all manner of important things. I could not, upon my honour, see that there was any place for me, and I went my own way, not that there was much ¹⁵ comfort in it.

And then I would rather have had charge of an hospital ward than take care of that uncle. Such coddlings as he needed, such humouring of whims. And I am bound to say that Polly couldn't have been ²⁰ more dutiful to him if he had been a Hindoo idol. She read to him and talked to him, and sat by him with her embroidery, and was patient with his crossness, and wearied herself, that I could see, with her devoted ministrations. ²⁵

I fancied sometimes she was tired of it, and longed for the old homely simplicity. I was. Nepotism had no charms for me. There was nothing that I could get Polly that she had not. I could surprise her with no little delicacies or trifles, delightedly bought with money ³⁰ saved for this purpose. There was no more coming home weary with office work and being met at the door with that warm, loving welcome which the King of England could not buy. There was no long evening ³⁵ when we read alternately from some favourite book, or laid our deep house-keeping plans, rejoiced in a good bargain or made light of a poor one, and were contented

and merry with little. I recalled with longing my little den, where, in the midst of the literary disorder I love, I wrote those stories for the Antarctic which Polly, if nobody else, liked to read. There was no comfort for me in my magnificent library. We were all rich and in splendour, and our uncle had come from India. I wished, saving his soul, that the ship that brought him over had foundered off Barnegat Light.¹ It would always have been a tender and regretful memory to both of us. And how sacred is the memory of such a loss.

Christmas? What delight could I have in long solicitude and ingenious devices touching a gift for Polly within my means, and hitting the border line between her necessities and her extravagant fancy! A drove of white elephants wouldn't have been good enough for her now, if each one carried a castle on his back.

"——and so they were married, and in their snug cottage lived happy ever after." It was Polly's voice, as she closed the book.

"There, I don't believe you have heard a word of it," she said, half complainingly.

"Oh yes, I have," I cried, starting up and giving the fire a jab with the poker; "I heard every word of it, except a few at the close. I was thinking——" I stopped, and looked round.

"Why Polly, where is the camel's-hair shawl?"

"Camel's-hair fiddlestick! Now I know you have been asleep for an hour."

And, sure enough, there wasn't any camel's-hair shawl there, nor any uncle, nor were there any Hindoos at our windows.

And then I told Polly all about it; how her uncle came back, and we were rich and lived in a palace and had no end of money, but she didn't seem to have time

¹ **Barnegat Light**—East of New Jersey.

to love me in it at all, and all the comfort of the little house was blown away as by the winter wind. And Polly vowed, half in tears, that she hoped her uncle would never come back, and she wanted nothing that we had not, and she wouldn't exchange our independent comfort and snug house, no, not for anybody's mansion. And then and there we made it all up, in a manner too particular for me to mention; and I never, to this day, heard Polly allude to My Uncle in India.

And then, as the clock struck eleven, we each produced from the place where we had hidden them the modest Christmas gifts we had prepared for each other, and what surprise there was! "Just the thing I needed." And, "It's perfectly lovely." And, "You shouldn't have done it." And, then, a question I never will answer, "Ten? fifteen? five? twelve?" "My dear, it cost eight hundred dollars, for I have put my whole year into it, and I wish it was a thousand times better."

And so, when the great iron tongue of the city bell swept over the snow the twelve strokes that announced Christmas Day, if there was anywhere a happier home than ours, I am glad of it!

—CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER [1829-1900].

THE SHIPWRECK

From David Copperfield ¹

I now approach an event in my life, so indelible, so awful, so bound by an infinite variety of ties to all that has preceded it, in these pages, that, from the beginning of my narrative, I have seen it growing larger and

¹ **David Copperfield** had passed the happiest years of his boyhood among the fishermen at Yarmouth and had become greatly attached to the family and friends of his old nurse Peggotty. Ham Peggotty was the accepted lover of his cousin Emily, but dazzled by the handsome face and gay manners of Steerforth, a former schoolmate of David's, she left home and ran

larger as I advanced, like a great tower in a plain, and throwing its forecast shadow even on the incidents of my childish days.

For years after it occurred, I dreamed of it often. I⁵ have started up so vividly impressed by it, that its fury has yet seemed raging in my quiet room, in the still night. I dream of it sometimes, though at lengthened and uncertain intervals, to this hour. I have an association between it and a stormy wind, or the lightest¹⁰ mention of a seashore, as strong as any of which my mind is conscious. As plainly as I behold what happened, I will try to write it down. I do not recall it, but see it done; for it happens again before me.

The time drawing on rapidly for the sailing of the¹⁵ emigrant-ship, my good old nurse (almost broken-hearted for me when we first met) came up to London. I was constantly with her, and her brother, and the Micawbers (they being very much together); but Emily I never saw.

²⁰ One evening when the time was close at hand, I was alone with Peggotty and her brother. Our conversation turned on Ham. She described to us how tenderly he had taken leave of her, and how manfully and quietly he had borne himself. Most of all, of late;²⁵ when she believed he was most tried. It was a subject of which the affectionate creature never tired; and our interest in hearing the many examples which she, who was so much with him, had to relate, was equal to hers in relating them.

³⁰ My aunt and I were at that time vacating the two cottages at Highgate; I intending to go abroad, and

away with him. Steerforth shortly afterwards deserted her and she returned to London. David now goes to Yarmouth to see the Peggottys in order to deliver a message from Emily. But in the meantime a storm arises, the vessel in which Steerforth has taken passage is wrecked off Yarmouth, and Ham loses his life in the heroic effort to save the man who has so cruelly wronged him.

she to return to her house at Dover. We had a temporary lodging in Covent Garden. As I walked home to it, after this evening's conversation, reflecting on what had passed between Ham and myself when I was last at Yarmouth, I wavered in the original purpose I had formed, of leaving a letter for Emily when I should take leave of her uncle on board the ship, and thought it would be better to write her now. She might desire, I thought, after receiving my communication, to send some parting word by me to her unhappy¹⁰ lover. I ought to give her the opportunity.

I therefore sat down in my room, before going to bed, and wrote to her. I told her that I had seen him, and that he had requested me to tell her what I have already written in its place in these sheets. I faithfully repeat-¹⁵ ed it. I had no need to enlarge upon it, if I had had the right. Its deep fidelity and goodness were not to be adorned by me or any man. I left it out, to be sent round in the morning; with a line to Mr. Peggotty, requesting him to give it to her; and went to bed at²⁰ daybreak.

I was weaker than I knew then; and, not falling asleep until the sun was up, lay late, and unrefreshed, next day. I was roused by the silent presence of my aunt at my bedside. I felt it in my sleep, as I suppose²⁵ we all do feel such things.

"Trot, my dear," she said, when I opened my eyes, "I couldn't make up my mind to disturb you. Mr. Peggotty is here; shall he come up?"

I replied yes, and he soon appeared.

"Mas'r Davy," he said, when he had shaken hands, "I giv Em'ly your letter, sir, and she writ this heer; and begged of me fur to ask you to read it, and if you see no hurt in't, to be so kind as take charge on't."

"Have you read it?" said I.

He nodded sorrowfully. I opened it, and read as follows:—

"I have got your message. Oh, what can I write, to thank you for your good and blessed kindness to me !

"I have put the words close to my heart. I shall keep them till I die. They are sharp thorns but they are such
5 comfort. I have prayed over them, oh, I have prayed so much. When I find what you are, and what uncle is, I think what God must be, and can cry to Him.

"Good bye for ever. Now, my dear, my friend, good
bye for ever in this world. In another world, if I am for-
10 given, I may wake, a child, and come to you. All thanks and blessings. Farewell, evermore !"

This, blotted with tears, was the letter.

"May I tell her as you doesn't see no hurt in't, and as you'll be so kind as take charge on't, Mas'r Davy?"
15 said Mr. Peggotty when I had read it.

"Unquestionably," said I—"but I am thinking—"

"Yes, Mas'r Davy?"

"I am thinking," said I, "that I'll go down again to Yarmouth. There's time, and to spare, for me to go
20 and come back before the ship sails. My mind is constantly running on him, in his solitude; to put this letter of her writing in his hand at this time, and to enable you to tell her, in the moment of parting, that he has got it, will be a kindness to both of them. I
25 solemnly accepted this commission, dear good fellow, and cannot discharge it too completely. The journey is nothing to me. I am restless, and shall be better in motion. I'll go down to-night."

Though he anxiously endeavoured to dissuade me, I
30 saw that he was of my mind; and this, if I had required to be confirmed in my intention, would have had the effect. He went round to the coach-office, at my request, and took the box-seat for me on the mail. In the evening I started, by that conveyance, down the
35 road I had traversed under so many vicissitudes.

"Don't you think that," I asked the coachman, in the first stage out of London, "a very remarkable sky? I don't remember to have seen one like it."

"Nor I—not equal to it," he replied. "That's

wind, sir. There'll be mischief done at sea, I expect, before long."

It was a murky confusion—here and there blotted with a colour like the colour of the smoke from damp fuel—of flying clouds tossed up into most remarkable⁵ heaps, suggesting greater heights in the clouds than there were depths below them to the bottom of the deepest hollows in the earth, through which the wild moon seemed to plunge headlong, as if, in a dread disturbance of the laws of nature, she had lost her way¹⁰ and were frightened. There had been a wind all day; and it was rising then, with an extraordinary great sound. In another hour it had much increased, and the sky was more overcast, and blew hard.

But as the night advanced, the clouds closing in¹⁵ and densely overspreading the whole sky, then very dark, it came on to blow, harder and harder. It still increased, until our horses could scarcely face the wind. Many times, in the dark part of the night (it was then late in September, when the nights were not short),²⁰ the leaders turned about, or came to a dead stop; and we were often in serious apprehension that the coach would be blown over. Sweeping gusts of rain came up before this storm, like showers of steel; and, at those times, when there was any shelter of trees or²⁵ lee walls to be got, we were fain to stop, in a sheer impossibility of continuing the struggle.

When the day broke, it blew harder and harder. I had been in Yarmouth when the seamen said it blew great guns, but I had never known the like of this, or³⁰ anything approaching to it. We came to Ipswich—very late, having had to fight every inch of ground since we were ten miles out of London; and found a cluster of people in the market-place, who had risen from their beds in the night, fearful of falling chimneys.³⁵ Some of these, congregating about the inn-yard while we changed horses, told us of great sheets of lead having

been ripped off a high church-tower, and flung into a by-street, which they then blocked up. Others had to tell of country people, coming in from neighbouring villages, who had seen great trees lying torn out of the⁵ earth, and whole ricks scattered about the roads and fields. Still there was no abatement in the storm, but it blew harder.

As we struggled on, nearer and nearer to the sea, from which this mighty wind was blowing dead on¹⁰ shore, its force became more and more terrific. Long before we saw the sea, its spray was on our lips and showered salt rain upon us. The water was out, over miles and miles of the flat country adjacent to Yarmouth; and every sheet and puddle lashed its banks,¹⁵ and had its stress of little breakers setting heavily towards us. When we came within sight of the sea, the waves on the horizon, caught at intervals above the rolling abyss, were like glimpses of another shore with towers and buildings. When at last we got into²⁰ the town, the people came out to their doors, all aslant, and with streaming hair, making a wonder of the mail that had come through such a night.

I put up at the old inn, and went down to look at the sea; staggering along the street, which was strewn²⁵ with sand and sea-weed, and with flying blotches of sea-foam; afraid of falling slates and tiles; and holding by people I met, at angry corners. Coming near the beach, I saw, not only the boatmen, but half the people of the town, lurking behind buildings; some now and³⁰ then braving the fury of the storm to look away to sea, and blown sheer out of their course in trying to get zigzag back.

Joining these groups, I found bewailing women whose husbands were away in herring or oyster boats,³⁵ which there was too much reason to think might have foundered before they could run in anywhere for safety. Grizzled old sailors were among the people,

shaking their heads as they looked from water to sky, and muttering to one another; shipowners, excited and uneasy; children, huddling together, and peering into older faces; even stout mariners, disturbed and anxious, levelling their glasses at the sea from behind⁵ places of shelter, as if they were surveying an enemy.

The tremendous sea itself, when I could find sufficient pause to look at it, in the agitation of the blinding wind, the flying stones and sand, and the awful noise, confounded me. As the high watery walls came¹⁰ rolling in, and, at their highest, tumbled into surf, they looked as if the least would engulf the town. As the receding wave swept back with a hoarse roar, it seemed to scoop out deep caves in the beach, as if its purpose were to undermine the earth. When some¹⁵ white-headed billows thundered on, and dashed themselves to pieces before they reached the land, every fragment of the late whole seemed possessed by the full might of its wrath, rushing to be gathered to the composition of another monster. Undulating hills²⁰ were changed to valleys, undulating valleys (with a solitary storm-bird sometimes skimming through them) were lifted up to hills; masses of water shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound; every shape tumultuously rolled on, as soon as made, to²⁵ change its shape and place, and beat another shape and place away; the ideal shore on the horizon, with its towers and buildings, rose and fell; the clouds flew fast and thick; I seemed to see a rending and upheaving of all nature.³⁰

Not finding Ham among the people whom this memorable wind—for it is still remembered down there, as the greatest ever known to blow upon that coast—had brought together, I made my way to his house. It was shut; and as no one answered to my³⁵ knocking, I went by back ways and by-lanes, to the yard where he worked. I learned there that he had gone

to Lowestoft, to meet some sudden exigency of ship-repairing in which his skill was required; but that he would be back to-morrow morning, in good time.

I went back to the inn; and when I had washed⁵ and dressed, and tried to sleep, but in vain, it was five o'clock in the afternoon. I had not sat five minutes by the coffee-room fire, when the waiter coming to stir it, as an excuse for talking, told me that two colliers had gone down, with all hands, a few miles¹⁰ away; and that some other ships had been seen labouring hard in the Roads, and trying, in great distress, to keep off shore. Mercy on them, and on all poor sailors, said he, if we had another night like the last!

I was very much depressed in spirits; very solitary;¹⁵ and felt an uneasiness in Ham's not being there, disproportionate to the occasion. I was seriously affected, without knowing how much, by late events; and my long exposure to the fierce wind had confused me. There was that jumble in my thoughts and recollec-²⁰tions, that I had lost the clear arrangement of time and distance. Thus, if I had gone out into the town, I should not have been surprised, I think, to encounter some one who I knew must be then in London. So to speak, there was in these respects a curious inattention²⁵ in my mind. Yet it was busy, too, with all the remembrances the place naturally awakened; and they were particularly distinct and vivid.

In this state, the waiter's dismal intelligence about the ships immediately connected itself, without any³⁰ effort of my volition, with my uneasiness about Ham. I was persuaded that I had an apprehension of his returning from Lowestoft by sea, and being lost. This grew so strong with me, that I resolved to go back to the yard before I took my dinner, and ask the boat-³⁵builder if he thought his attempting to return by sea at all likely. If he gave me the least reason to think

so, I would go over to Lowestoft and prevent it by bringing him with me.

I hastily ordered my dinner, and went back to the yard. I was none too soon; for the boat-builder, with a lantern in his hand, was locking the yard-gate. He⁵ quite laughed, when I asked him the question, and said there was no fear; no man in his senses, or out of them, would put off in such a gale of wind, least of all Ham Peggotty, who had been born to seafaring.

So sensible of this, beforehand, that I had really¹⁰ felt ashamed of doing what I was nevertheless impelled to do, I went back to the inn. If such a wind could rise, I think it was rising. The howl and roar, the rattling, of the doors and windows, the rumbling in the chimneys, the apparent rocking of the very house that sheltered¹⁵ me, and the prodigious tumult of the sea, were more fearful than in the morning. But there was now a great darkness besides; and that invested the storm with new terrors, real and fanciful.

I could not eat, I could not sit still, I could not²⁰ continue steadfast to anything. Something within me, faintly answering to the storm without, tossed up the depths of my memory, and made a tumult in them. Yet, in all the hurry of my thoughts, wild running with the thundering sea,—the storm, and my uneasi-²⁵ness regarding Ham, were always in the foreground.

My dinner went away almost untasted, and I tried to refresh myself with a glass or two of wine. In vain. I fell into a dull slumber before the fire, without losing my consciousness, either of the uproar out of doors,³⁰ or of the place in which I was. Both became overshadowed by a new and undefinable horror; and when I awoke—or rather when I shook off the lethargy that bound me in my chair—my whole frame thrilled³⁵ with objectless and unintelligible fear.

I walked to and fro, tried to read an old gazetteer, listened to the awful noises, looked at faces, scenes,

and figures in the fire. At length, the steady ticking of the undisturbed clock on the wall tormented me to that degree that I resolved to go to bed.

It was reassuring, on such a night, to be told that
⁵ some of the inn-servants had agreed together to sit up until morning. I went to bed, exceedingly weary and heavy; but, on my lying down, all such sensations vanished, as if by magic, and I was broad awake, with every sense refined.

¹⁰ For hours I lay there, listening to the wind and water; imagining, now, that I heard shrieks out at sea; now, that I distinctly heard the firing of signal guns; and now, the fall of houses in the town. I got up, several times, and looked out; but could see nothing, except the re-
¹⁵ flection in the window-panes of the faint candle I had left burning, and of my own haggard face looking in at me from the black void.

At length, my restlessness attained to such a pitch, that I hurried on my clothes, and went down stairs.
²⁰ In the large kitchen, where I dimly saw bacon and ropes of onions hanging from the beams, the watchers were clustered together, in various attitudes, about a table, purposely moved away from the great chimney, and brought near the door. A pretty girl, who had
²⁵ her ears stopped with her apron, and her eyes upon the door, screamed when I appeared, supposing me to be a spirit; but the others had more presence of mind, and were glad of an addition to their company. One man, referring to the topic they had been discussing,
³⁰ asked me whether I thought the souls of the collier-crews who had gone down, were out in the storm?

I remained there, I dare say, two hours. Once, I opened the yard-gate, and looked into the empty street. The sand, the sea-weed, and the flakes of
³⁵ foam, were driving by; and I was obliged to call for assistance before I could shut the gate again, and make it fast against the wind.

There was a dark gloom in my solitary chamber when I at length returned to it; but I was tired now, and, getting into bed again, fell—off a tower and down a precipice—into the depths of sleep. I have an impression that for a long time, though I dreamed of⁵ being elsewhere and in a variety of scenes, it was always blowing in my dream. At length I lost that feeble hold upon reality, and was engaged with two dear friends, but who they were I don't know, at the siege of some town, in a roar of cannonading.¹⁰

The thunder of the cannon was so loud and incessant that I could not hear something I much desired to hear, until I made a great exertion and awoke. It was broad day—eight or nine o'clock; the storm raging in lieu of the batteries; and some one knocking and¹⁵ calling at my door.

“What is the matter?” I cried.

“A wreck! Close by!”

I sprang out of bed, and asked, what wreck?

“A schooner, from Spain or Portugal, laden with²⁰ fruit and wine. Make haste, sir, if you want to see her! It's thought, down on the beach, she'll go to pieces every moment.”

The excited voice went clamouring along the staircase; and I wrapped myself in my clothes as quickly²⁵ as I could, and ran into the street.

Numbers of people were there before me, all running in one direction, to the beach. I ran the same way, outstripping a good many, and soon came facing the wild sea.³⁰

The wind might by this time have lulled a little, though not more sensibly than if the cannonading I had dreamed of, had been diminished by the silencing of half-a-dozen guns out of hundreds. But, the sea, having upon it the additional agitation of the whole³⁵ night, was infinitely more terrific than when I had seen it last. Every appearance it had then presented, bore

the expression of being *swelled*; and the height to which the breakers rose, and, looking over one another, bore one another down, and rolled in, in interminable hosts, was most appalling.

⁵ In the difficulty of hearing anything but wind and waves, and in the crowd, and the unspeakable confusion, and my first breathless efforts to stand against the weather, I was so confused that I looked out to sea for the wreck, and saw nothing but the foaming heads of
¹⁰ the great waves. A half-dressed boatman, standing next me, pointed with his bare arm (a tattoo'd arrow on it, pointing in the same direction) to the left. Then, O great Heaven, I saw it, close in upon us!

One mast was broken short off, six or eight feet from
¹⁵ the deck, and lay over the side, entangled in a maze of sail and rigging; and all that ruin, as the ship rolled and beat—which she did without a moment's pause, and with a violence quite inconceivable—beat the sides as if it would stave it in. Some efforts were even then
²⁰ being made to cut this portion of the wreck away; for, as the ship, which was broadside on, turned towards us in her rolling, I plainly descried her people at work with axes, especially one active figure with long curling hair, conspicuous among the rest. But, a great cry,
²⁵ which was audible even above the wind and water, rose from the shore at this moment; the sea, sweeping over the rolling wreck, made a clean breach, and carried men, spars, casks, planks, bulwarks, heaps of such toys, into the boiling surge.

³⁰ The second mast was yet standing, with the rags of a rent sail, and a wild confusion of broken cordage flapping to and fro. The ship had struck once, the same boatman hoarsely said in my ear, and then lifted in and struck again. I understood him to add that
³⁵ she was parting amidships, and I could readily suppose so, for the rolling and beating were too tremendous for any human work to suffer long. As he spoke, there

was another great cry of pity from the beach; four men arose with the wreck out of the deep, clinging to the rigging of the remaining mast; uppermost, the active figure with the curling hair.

There was a bell on board; and as the ship rolled⁵ and dashed, like a desperate creature driven mad, now showing us the whole sweep of her deck, as she turned on her beam-ends towards the shore, now nothing but her keel, as she sprang wildly over and turned towards the sea, the bell rang; and its sound,¹⁰ the knell of those unhappy men, was borne towards us on the wind. Again we lost her, and again she rose. Two men were gone. The agony on shore increased. Men groaned, and clasped their hands; women shrieked, and turned away their faces. Some¹⁵ ran wildly up and down along the beach, crying for help where no help could be. I found myself one of these, frantically imploring a knot of sailors whom I knew, not to let those two lost creatures perish before²⁰ our eyes.

They were making out to me, in an agitated way—I don't know how, for the little I could hear I was scarcely composed enough to understand—that the life-boat had been bravely manned an hour ago, and could do nothing; and that as no man would be so²⁵ desperate as to attempt to wade off with a rope, and establish a communication with the shore, there was nothing left to try; when I noticed that some new sensation moved the people on the beach, and saw them part, and Ham came breaking through them to the³⁰ front.

I ran to him—as well as I know, to repeat my appeal for help. But, distracted though I was, by a sight so new to me and terrible, the determination in his face, and his look out to sea—exactly the same look³⁵ as I remembered in connexion with the morning after Emily's flight—awoke me to a knowledge of his danger.

I held him back with both arms; and implored the men with whom I had been speaking, not to listen to him, not to do murder, not to let him stir from off that sand!

⁵ Another cry arose on shore; and looking to the wreck, we saw the cruel sail, with blow on blow, beat off the lower of the two men, and fly up in triumph round the active figure left alone upon the mast.

Against such a sight, and against such determination
¹⁰ as that of the calmly desperate man who was already accustomed to lead half the people present, I might as hopefully have entreated the wind. “‘Mas’r Davy,” he said, cheerily grasping me by both hands, “if my time is come, ’tis come. If ’tan’t, I’ll bide it. Lord above
¹⁵ bless you, and bless all! Mates, make me ready! I’m a going off.”

I was swept away, but not unkindly, to some distance, where the people around me made me stay; urging, as I confusedly perceived, that he was bent on
²⁰ going, with help or without, and that I should endanger the precautions for his safety by troubling those with whom they rested. I don’t know what I answered, or what they rejoined; but I saw hurry on the beach, and men running with ropes from a capstan¹ that was
²⁵ there, and penetrating into a circle of figures that hid him from me. Then, I saw him standing alone, in a seaman’s frock and trowsers; a rope in his hand, or slung to his wrist; another round his body; and several of the best men holding, at a little distance, to the
³⁰ latter, which he laid out himself, slack upon the shore, at his feet.

The wreck, even to my unpractised eye, was breaking up. I saw that she was parting in the middle, and that the life of the solitary man upon the mast hung by
³⁵ a thread. Still, he clung to it. He had a singular red cap on,—not like a sailor’s cap, but of a finer colour;

¹ **capstan**—A machine for winding up a cable.

and as the few yielding planks between him and destruction rolled and bulged, and his anticipative death-knell rang, he was seen by all of us to wave it. I saw him do it now, and thought I was going distracted, when his action brought an old remembrance to my mind of ⁵ a once dear friend.

Ham watched the sea, standing alone, with the silence of suspended breath behind him, and the storm before, until there was a great retiring wave, when, with a backward glance at those who held the rope ¹⁰ which was made fast round his body, he dashed in after it, and in a moment was buffeting with the water; rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the foam; then drawn again to land. They ¹⁵ hauled in hastily.

He was hurt. I saw blood on his face, from where I stood; but he took no thought of that. He seemed hurriedly to give them some directions for leaving him more free—or so I judged from the motion of his arm—and was gone as before. ²⁰

And now he made for the wreck, rising with the hills, falling with the valleys, lost beneath the rugged foam, born in towards the shore, borne on towards the ship, striving hard and valiantly. The distance was nothing, but the power of the sea and wind made ²⁵ the strife deadly. At length he neared the wreck. He was so near that with one more of his vigorous strokes he would be clinging to it,—when, a high, green, vast hill-side of water, moving on shoreward, from beyond the ship, he seemed to leap up into it ³⁰ with a mighty bound, and the ship was gone!

Some eddying fragments I saw in the sea, as if a mere cask had been broken, in running to the spot where they were hauling in. Consternation was in every face. They drew him to my very feet—insensible—³⁵ dead. He was carried to the nearest house; and, no one preventing me now, I remained near him, busy,

while every means of restoration were tried; but he had been beaten to death by the great wave, and his generous heart was stilled for ever.

As I sat beside the bed, when hope was abandoned
 5 and all was done, a fisherman, who had known me when Emily and I were children and ever since, whispered my name at the door.

“Sir,” said he, with tears starting to his weather-beaten face, which, with his trembling lips, was ashy
 10 pale, “will you come over yonder?”

The old remembrance that had been recalled to me was in his look. I asked him, terror-stricken, leaning on the arm he held out to support me:

“Has a body come ashore?”

15 He said, “Yes.”

“Do I know it?” I asked then.

He answered nothing.

But, he led me to the shore. And on that part of it where she and I had looked for shells, two children,—
 20 on that part of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat,¹ blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind—among the ruins of the home he had wronged—I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school.

—CHARLES DICKENS [1812-1870].

THE DEFEAT OF BRADDOCK

From *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*

THUS began that memorable war which, kindling among the forests of America, scattered its fires over the kingdoms of Europe, and the sultry empire of the
 35 Great Mogul; the war made glorious by the heroic

¹ the old boat—The one that had been used as a house by the Peggotty family.

death of Wolfe, the victories of Frederic, and the marvellous exploits of Clive; the war which controlled the destinies of America, and was first in the chain of events which led on to her Revolution, with all its vast and undeveloped consequences. On the old ⁵ battle-ground of Europe, the struggle bore the same familiar features of violence and horror which had marked the strife of former generations—fields ploughed by the cannon ball, and walls shattered by the exploding mine, sacked towns and blazing suburbs, the lamentations of women, and the license of a maddened soldiery. But in America, war assumed a new and striking aspect. A wilderness was its sublime arena. Army met army under the shadows of primeval ¹⁵ woods; their cannon resounded over wastes unknown to civilised man. And before the hostile powers could join in battle, endless forests must be traversed, and morasses passed, and everywhere the axe of the pioneer must hew a path for the bayonet of the soldier.

Before the declaration of war, and before the breaking off of negotiations between the courts of France and England, the English ministry formed the plan of assailing the French in America on all sides at once, and repelling them, by one bold push, from all their encroachments. A provincial army was to advance ²⁵ upon Acadia, a second was to attack Crown Point,¹ and a third Niagara; while the two regiments which had lately arrived in Virginia under General Braddock, aided by a strong body of provincials, were to dislodge the French from their newly-built fort of Du Quesne.² ³⁰ To Braddock was assigned the chief command of all the British forces in America; and a person worse fitted for the office could scarcely have been found.

¹ **Crown Point**—On Lake Champlain. It was abandoned by the French in 1759.

² **Du Quesne**—A fort erected in 1754 on the site of the present city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

His experience had been ample, and none could doubt his courage; but he was profligate, arrogant, perverse, and a bigot to military rules. On his first arrival in Virginia, he called together the governors of the several
5 provinces, in order to explain his instructions and adjust the details of the projected operations. These arrangements complete, Braddock advanced to the borders of Virginia, and formed his camp at Fort Cumberland where he spent several weeks in training
10 the raw backwoodsmen who joined him, into such discipline as they seemed capable of; in collecting horses and wagons, which could only be had with the utmost difficulty; in railing at the contractors, who scandalously cheated him; and in venting his spleen
15 by copious abuse of the country and the people. All at length was ready, and early in June, 1755, the army left civilisation behind, and struck into the broad wilderness as a squadron puts out to sea.

It was no easy task to force their way over that
20 rugged ground, covered with an unbroken growth of forest; and the difficulty was increased by the needless load of baggage which encumbered their march. The crash of falling trees resounded in the front, where a hundred axemen laboured, with ceaseless toil,
25 to hew a passage for the army. The horses strained their utmost strength to drag the ponderous wagons over roots and stumps, through gullies and quagmires; and the regular troops were daunted by the depth and gloom of the forest which hedged them in on either
30 hand, and closed its leafy arches above their heads. So tedious was their progress, that, by the advice of Washington, twelve hundred chosen men moved on in advance with the lighter baggage and artillery, leaving the rest of the army to follow, by slower
35 stages, with the heavy wagons. On the eighth of July the advanced body reached the Monongahela,¹

¹ **Monongahela**—A river in West Virginia. It unites with the Alleghany at Pittsburgh to form the Ohio.

at a point not far distant from Fort du Quesne. The rocky and impracticable ground on the eastern side debarred their passage, and the general resolved to cross the river in search of a smoother path, and re-cross it a few miles lower down, in order to gain the⁵ fort. The first passage was easily made, and the troops moved, in glittering array, down the western margin of the water, rejoicing that their goal was well-nigh reached, and the hour of their expected triumph close at hand.¹⁰

Scouts and Indian runners had brought the tidings of Braddock's approach to the French at Fort du Quesne. Their dismay was great, and Contrecoeur, the commander, thought only of retreat, when Beaujeu, a captain in the garrison, made the bold proposal¹⁵ of leading out a party of French and Indians to waylay the English in the woods, and harass or interrupt their march. The offer was accepted and Beaujeu hastened to the Indian camps.

Around the fort and beneath the adjacent forests²⁰ were the bark lodges of savage hordes, whom the French had mustered from far and near: Ojibwas and Ottawas, Hurons and Caughnawagas, Abenakis and Delawares. Beaujeu called the warriors together, flung a hatchet on the ground before them, and invited²⁵ them to follow him out to battle; but the boldest stood aghast at the peril, and none would accept the challenge. A second interview took place with no better success; but the Frenchman was resolved to carry his point. "I am determined to go," he exclaimed. "What,³⁰ will you suffer your father to go alone?" His daring proved contagious. The warriors hesitated no longer; and when, on the morning of the ninth of July, a scout ran in with the news that the English army was but a few miles distant, the Indian camps were at³⁵ once astir with the turmoil of preparation. Chiefs harangued their yelling followers, braves bedaubed

themselves with war-paint, smeared themselves with grease, hung feathers in their scalp-locks, and whooped and stamped till they had wrought themselves into a delirium of valour.

⁵ That morning, James Smith, an English prisoner recently captured on the frontier of Pennsylvania, stood on the rampart, and saw the half-frenzied multitude thronging about the gateway, where kegs of bullets and gunpowder were broken open, that each might
¹⁰ help himself at will. Then band after band hastened away towards the forest, followed and supported by nearly two hundred and fifty French and Canadians, commanded by Beaujeu. There were the Ottawas, led on, it is said, by the remarkable man¹ whose name
¹⁵ stands on the title-page of this history; there were the Hurons of Lorette under their chief, whom the French called Athanase, and many more, all keen as hounds on the scent of blood. At about nine miles from the fort, they reached a spot where the narrow road de-
²⁰ scended to the river through deep and gloomy woods, and where two ravines, concealed by trees and bushes, seemed formed by nature for an ambushade. Here the warriors ensconced themselves, and, levelling their guns over the edge, lay in fierce expectation, listening
²⁵ to the advancing drums of the English army.

It was past noon of a day brightened with the clear sunlight of an American midsummer, when the forces of Braddock began, for a second time, to cross the Monongahela, at the fording-place, which to this
³⁰ day bears the name of their ill-fated leader. The scarlet columns of the British regulars, complete in martial appointment,² the rude backwoodsmen with shouldered rifles, the trains of artillery and the white-topped wagons, moved on in long procession through
³⁵ the shallow current, and slowly mounted the opposing

¹ the remarkable man—Pontiac.

² appointment—Equipment.

bank. Men were there whose names have become historic; Gage, who, twenty years later, saw his routed battalions recoil in disorder from before the breastwork on Bunker Hill;¹ Gates, the future conqueror of Burgoyne;² and one destined for far loftier fame; George⁵ Washington, a boy in years, a man in calm thought and self-ruling wisdom.

With steady and well-ordered march, the troops advanced into the great labyrinth of woods which shadowed the eastern borders of the river. Rank¹⁰ after rank vanished from sight. The forest swallowed them up, and the silence of the wilderness sank down once more on the shores and waters of the Monongahela.

Several guides and six light horsemen led the way; a body of grenadiers was close behind, and the army¹⁵ followed in such order as the rough ground would permit. Their road was tunnelled through the forest; yet, deaf alike to the voice of common sense and to the counsel of his officers, Braddock had neglected to throw out scouts in advance, and pressed forward in²⁰ blind security to meet his fate. Leaving behind the low grounds which bordered on the river, the van of the army was now ascending a gently sloping hill; and here, well hidden by the thick standing columns of the forest, by mouldering prostrate trunks, by²⁵ matted under-growth, by long rank grasses, lay, on either flank, the two fatal ravines where the Indian allies of the French were crouched in breathless ambuscade. No man saw the danger, when suddenly a discordant cry arose in front, and a murderous fire³⁰ blazed in the teeth of the astonished grenadiers. Instinctively, as it were, the survivors returned the volley, and returned it with good effect; for a random

¹ **Bunker Hill**—June 17th, 1775.

² **Burgoyne**—Commanded the British army which invaded New York in 1777. He was defeated, and surrendered at Saratoga the same year.

shot struck down the brave Beaujeu, and the courage of the assailants was staggered by his fall. Dumas, second in command, rallied them to the attack, and while he, with the French and Canadians, made good
⁵ the pass in front, the Indians opened a deadly fire on the right and left of the British columns. In a few moments, all was confusion. The advance guard fell back on the main body, and every trace of subordination vanished. The fire soon extended along the whole
¹⁰ length of the army, from front to rear. Scarce an enemy could be seen, though the forest resounded with their yells; though every bush and tree was alive with incessant flashes; though the lead flew like a hail-storm, and with every moment the men went down
¹⁵ by scores. The regular troops seemed bereft of their senses. They huddled together in the road like flocks of sheep; and happy did he think himself who could wedge his way into the midst of the crowd, and place a barrier of human flesh between his life and the shot
²⁰ of the ambushed marksmen. Many were seen eagerly loading their muskets, and then firing them into the air, or shooting their own comrades, in the insanity of their terror. The officers for the most part, displayed a conspicuous gallantry; but threats and commands
²⁵ were wasted alike on the panic-stricken multitude. It is said that at the outset Braddock showed signs of fear; but he soon recovered his wonted intrepidity. Five horses were shot under him, and five times he mounted afresh. He stormed and shouted, and,
³⁰ while the Virginians were fighting to good purpose, each man behind a tree, like the Indians themselves, he ordered them with furious menace to form in platoons,¹ where the fire of the enemy mowed them down like grass. At length, a mortal shot² silenced him, and two

¹platoon—A hollow square.

²a mortal shot—Braddock died four days later at Great Meadows, about sixty miles from Pittsburgh.

provincials bore him off the field. Washington rode through the tumult calm and undaunted. Two horses were killed under him, and four bullets pierced his clothes; but his hour was not come, and he escaped without a wound. Gates was shot through the body,⁵ and Gage also was severely wounded. Of eighty-six officers, only twenty-three remained unhurt; and of twelve hundred soldiers who crossed the Monongahela, more than seven hundred were killed and wounded. None suffered more severely than the Virginians,¹⁰ who had displayed throughout a degree of courage and steadiness which put the cowardice of the regulars to shame. The havoc among them was terrible, for of their whole number scarcely one-fifth left the field alive.¹⁵

The slaughter lasted three hours; when, at length, the survivors, as if impelled by a general impulse, rushed tumultuously from the place of carnage, and with dastardly precipitation fled across the Monongahela. The enemy did not pursue beyond the river,²⁰ flocking back to the field to collect the plunder, and gather a rich harvest of scalps. The routed troops pursued their flight until they met the rear division of the army, under Colonel Dunbar; and even then their senseless terrors did not abate. Dunbar's soldiers²⁵ caught the infection. Cannon, baggage, provisions and wagons were destroyed, and all fled together, eager to escape from the shadows of those awful woods, whose horrors haunted their imagination. They passed the defenceless settlements of the border,³⁰ and hurried on to Philadelphia, leaving the unhappy people to defend themselves as they might against the tomahawk and scalping-knife.

The calamities of this disgraceful overthrow did not cease with the loss of a few hundred soldiers on the field of battle; for it entailed upon the provinces all³⁵ the miseries of an Indian war. Those among the

tribes who had thus far stood neutral, wavering between the French and English, now hesitated no longer. Many of them had been disgusted by the contemptuous behaviour of Braddock. All had learned to despise
 5 the courage of the English, and to regard their own prowess with unbounded complacency. It is not in Indian nature to stand quiet in the midst of war; and the defeat of Braddock was a signal for the western savages to snatch their tomahawks and assail the Eng-
 10 lish settlements with one accord; to murder and pillage with ruthless fury, and turn the whole frontier of Pennsylvania and Virginia into one wide scene of woe and desolation.

—FRANCIS PARKMAN [1823-1893].

A RIVAL

From *Carancro*¹

TIME passed; the children grew. The children older
 20 than they in the same house became less and less like children, and began to disappear from the family board and roof by a mysterious process called marrying, which greatly mystified Zoséphine, but equally pleased her by the festive and jocund character of the occasions,
 25 times when there was a ravishing abundance of fried rice cakes and *boulettes*—beef balls.

To Bonaventure these affairs brought less mystery and less unalloyed pleasure. He understood them better. Some boys are born lovers. From the time
 30 they can reach out from the nurse's arms they must be billing and cooing and choosing a mate. Such was ardent little Bonaventure; and none of the Gradnego

¹*Carancro* is a short story of Acadian life in Louisiana, in which the chief character, Bonaventure, is of Creole blood. Bonaventure had been adopted by Sosthène, an Acadian planter, father of Zoséphine.

weddings ever got quite through its ceremony without his big blue eyes being found full of tears—tears of mingled anger and desolation—because by some unpardonable oversight he and Zoséphine were still left unmarried. So that the pretty damsel would have to take him aside and promise him, “Next time—next time, without fail!”⁵

Nevertheless he always reaped two proud delights from these events. For one, Sosthène always took him upon his lap and introduced him as his little Creole.¹ ¹⁰ And the other, the ex-governor came to these demonstrations—the great governor! who lifted him to his knee and told him of those wonderful things called cities, full of people that could read and write; and about steamboats and steam-cars.¹⁵

At length one day, when weddings had now pretty well thinned out the ranks of Sosthène’s family, the ex-governor made his appearance though no marriage was impending. Bonaventure, sitting on his knee, asked why he had come, and the ex-governor told him²⁰ there was war.

“Do you not want to make haste and grow up and be a dragoon?”

The child was silent and Sosthène laughed a little as he said privately in English, which tongue his exceptional thrift had put him in possession of—²⁵

“Aw, naw!”—he shook his head amusedly—“he dawn’t like hoss.”

“He ought to go to school,” said the ex-governor. And Sosthène, half to himself, responded in a hopeless³⁰ tone—

“Yaas.” Neither Sosthène nor any of his children had ever done that.

* * * * *

¹ **Creole**—This word has a variety of meanings in the Southern States, and the West Indies. In Louisiana it is generally applied to the natives of pure French or Spanish descent, as distinguished from the Acadian French and other settlers.

War¹ it was. The horsemen grew scarce on the wide prairies of Opelousas.² Far away in Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, on bloody fields, many an Acadian volunteer and many a poor conscript³ fought and fell for a cause
⁵ that was really none of theirs, simple, non-slave-holding peasants; and many died in camp and hospital—often of wounds, often of fevers, often of mere longing for home. Bonaventure and Zoséphine learned this much of war: that it was a state of affairs in which dear
¹⁰ faces went away, and strange ones came back with tidings that brought bitter wailings from mothers and wives, and made the old fathers sit very silent. Three times over that was the way of it in Sosthène's house.

It was also a condition of things that somehow
¹⁵ changed boys into men very young. A great distance away, but still in sight south-westward across the prairie, a dot of dark green showed where dwelt a sister and brother-in-law of Sosthène's wife. There was not the same domestic excellence there as at Sosthène's;
²⁰ yet the dooryard was very populous with fowls; within the house was always heard the hard thump, thump of the loom or the loud moan of the spinning wheel; and the children were many. The eldest was Athanase. Though but fifteen he was already stalwart, and showed
²⁵ that intelligent sympathy in the family cares that makes such offspring the mother's comfort and the father's hope. At that age he had done but one thing to diminish that comfort or that hope. One would have supposed an ambitious chap like him would have
³⁰ spent his first earnings, as other ambitious ones did, for a saddle; but 'Thanase had bought a fiddle.

He had hardly got it before he knew how to play it. Yet, to the father's most welcome surprise, he remained

¹war—The war between the North and the South, 1861-1865.

²Opelousas—A district in Louisiana settled by the Acadians.

³conscript—A forced recruit.

just as bold a rider and as skilful a thrower of the *arriatte*¹ as ever. He came into great demand for the Saturday night balls. When the courier with a red kerchief on a wand came galloping round, the day before, from *ile* to *ile*,—for these descendants of a⁵ maritime race call their homestead groves islands,—to tell where the ball was to be, he would assert, if there was even a hope of it, that 'Thanase was to be the fiddler.

In this way 'Thanase and his pretty little first cousin¹⁰ Zoséphine, now in her fourteenth year, grew to be well acquainted. For at thirteen, of course, she began to move in society, which meant to join in the contra-dance. 'Thanase did not dance with her, or with any one. She wondered why he did not; but many other¹⁵ girls had similar thoughts about themselves. He only played, his playing growing better and better, finer and finer, every time he was heard anew. As to the few other cavaliers, very willing were they to have it so. The music could not be too good, and if 'Thanase was²⁰ already perceptibly a rival when hoisted up in a chair on top of a table, fiddle and bow in hand, it was just as well not to urge him to come down into the lists upon the dancing-floor. But they found one night, at length, that the music could be too good—when²⁵ 'Thanase struck up something that was not a dance, and lads and damsels crowded around standing and listening, and asking ever for more, and the ball turned out a failure because the concert was such a success.

The memory of that night was of course still vivid³⁰ next day, Sunday, and Zoséphine's memory was as good as anyone's. I wish you might have seen her in those days of the early bud. The time had returned when Sosthène could once more get all his household—so had marriages decimated it—into one vehicle. a³⁵ thing he had not been able to do for almost these

¹ *arriatte*—Lasso; a rope with a noose

twenty years. Zoséphine and Bonaventure sat on a back seat contrived for them in the family *calèche*.¹ In front were the broad-brimmed Campeachy² hat of Sosthène and the meek, limp sunbonnet of the mother.

⁵ About the small figure of the daughter there was always something distinguishing, even if you rode up from behind, that told of youth, of mettle, of self-regard; a neatness of fit in the dress, a firm erectness in the little slim back, a faint proudness of neck, a

¹⁰ glimpse of ribbon at the throat, another at the waist; a something of assertion in the slight crispness of her homespun sunbonnet, and a ravishing glint of two sparks inside it as you got one glance within—no more. And as you rode on, if you were a young blade, you

¹⁵ would be—as the soldier lads used to say—all curled up; but if you were an old moustache, you would smile inwardly and say to yourself, “She will have her way; she will make all winds blow in her chosen direction; she will please herself; she will be her own good luck

²⁰ and her own commander-in-chief, and, withal, nobody’s misery or humiliation, unless you count the swain after swain that will sigh in vain.” As for Bonaventure sitting beside her, you could just see his bare feet limply pendulous under his wide palm-leaf hat. And yet he

²⁵ was a very real personage.

“Bonaventure,” said Zoséphine,—this was as they were returning from church, the wide rawhide straps of their huge wooden two-wheeled vehicle creaking, as a new saddle would if a new saddle were as big as a

³⁰ house,—“Bonaventure, I wish you could learn how to dance. I am tired trying to teach you.” (This and most of the unbroken English of this story stands for Acadian French.)

¹ *calèche*—A low-wheeled light carriage, generally with a folding top.

² *Campeachy*—The name of a state in Central America.

Bonaventure looked meek for a moment and then resentful as he said—

“‘Thanase does not dance.’”

“‘Thanase! Bah! What has ‘Thanase to do with it? Who was even thinking of ‘Thanase? Was he there⁵ last night? Ah yes! I just remember now he was. But even he could dance if he chose; while you—you can’t learn! You vex me. ‘Thanase! What do you always bring him up for? I wish you would have the kindness just not to remind me of him! Why does not¹⁰ some one tell him how he looks, hoisted up with his feet in our faces, scratching his fiddle? Now, the fiddle, Bonaventure—the fiddle would just suit you. Ah, if you could play!’” But the boy’s quick anger so flashed from his blue eyes that she checked herself,¹⁵ and with contemplative serenity added—

“‘Pity nobody else can play so well as that tiresome fellow. It was positively silly, the way some girls stood listening to him last night. I’d be ashamed, or, rather, too proud, to flatter such a high-headed care-²⁰for-nobody. I wish he wasn’t my cousin!’”

Bonaventure, still incensed, remarked with quiet intensity that he knew why she wished ‘Thanase was not a cousin.

“‘It’s no such a thing!’” exclaimed Zoséphine, so²⁵ forcibly that Madame Sosthène’s sunbonnet turned around, and a murmur of admonition came from it. But the maiden was smiling and saying blithely to Bonaventure—

“‘Oh, you—you can’t even guess well.’” She was³⁰ about to say more, but suddenly hushed. Behind them a galloping horse drew near, softly pattering along the turfy road. As he came abreast, he dropped into a quiet trot.

The rider was a boyish yet manly figure in a new³⁵ suit of grey home-made linsey, the pantaloons thrust into the tops of the sturdy russet boots, and the jacket

ending underneath a broad leather belt that carried a heavy revolver in its holster¹ at one hip. A Campaigny hat shaded his face and shoulders, and a pair of Mexican spurs tinkled their little steel bells against
⁵ their huge five-spiked rowels on his heels. He scarcely sat in the saddle-tree—from hat to spurs you might have drawn a perpendicular line. It would have taken in shoulders, thighs and all.

“Adjieu,²” said the young centaur;³ and Sosthène
¹⁰ replied from the creaking calèche, “Adjieu, ’Thanase,” while the rider bestowed his rustic smile upon the group. Madame Sosthène’s eyes met his, and her lips moved in an inaudible greeting; but the eyes of her little daughter were in her lap. Bonaventure’s gaze was
¹⁵ hostile. A word or two passed between uncle and nephew, including a remark and admission that the cattle thieves were getting worse than ever; and with a touch of the spur, the young horseman galloped on.

It seems enough to admit that Zoséphine’s further
²⁰ remarks were silly without reporting them in full.

“Look at his back! What airs! If I had looked up, I should have laughed in his face!” etc. “Well,” she concluded, after much such chirruping, “there’s one comfort—he doesn’t care a cent for me. If I should
²⁵ die to-morrow, he would forget to come to the funeral. And you think I wouldn’t be glad? Well, you’re mistaken, as usual. I hate him, and I just know he hates me; everybody hates me!”

The eyes of her worshipper turned upon her. But
³⁰ she only turned her own away across the great plain to the vast arching sky, and patted the calèche with a little foot that ached for deliverance from its Sunday shoe. Then her glance returned, and all the rest of the

¹ **holster**—A case for a horseman’s pistol.

² **Adjieu**—An expression of greeting, “Good-day.”

³ **centaur**—Horseman. In Greek mythology the centaur was a fabulous being, half man, half horse.

way home she was as sweet as the last dip of cane-juice from the boiling battery.

Before many months pass, Bonaventure betrays 'Thanase to the conscript officers, and he is carried off to the war. On his return he marries Zoséphine. In the meantime the character of Bonaventure has undergone a change. He becomes less selfish and finds his true happiness at last in a life of service and devotion to others.

—GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE, [1844-1905].

BRUTE NEIGHBOURS.¹

From Walden

IT is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighbourhood of towns, suspected by ⁵ hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here! He grows to be four feet long, as big as a small boy, perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably ¹⁰ still heard their whinnering at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from under Brister's Hill, half a mile from my field. ¹⁵ The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows, full of young pitch-pines, into a larger wood about the swamp. There, in a very secluded and shaded spot, under a spreading white-pine, there was yet a clean firm sward to sit on. I had dug ²⁰ out the spring and made a well of clear gray water where I could dip up a pailful without roiling it, and

¹ For more than two years (1845-1847) Thoreau lived alone in a solitary shanty in the woods on the shores of Walden Pond, near Concord, Mass. *Walden* is a record of his experiences and observations during that time.

thither I went for this purpose almost every day in midsummer, when the pond was warmest. Thither too the wood-cock led her brood, to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath; but at last, spying me, she would leave her young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer till within four or five feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint wiry peep, single file through the swamp, as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There too the turtle-doves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white-pines over my head; or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these myrmidons¹ covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was

¹ **myrmidons**—Soldiers from Thessaly, followers of Achilles, in the Trojan War. According to fable the myrmidons were ants changed into men. Hence the appropriateness of the word as here used.

the only battle-field which I have ever witnessed, the only battle-field I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine¹ war; the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat,⁵ yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noon-day prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went¹⁰ out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger¹⁵ black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bull-dogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry²⁰ was Conquer or die. In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hill-side of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs;²⁵ whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles,² who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar,—for the blacks were nearly twice³⁰ the size of the red,—he drew near with rapid pace

¹ **internecine**—Mutually destructive.

² **Achilles and Patroclus**—In the Trojan War when Achilles withdrew from the fight he gave his friend Patroclus his armour and sent him at the head of the myrmidons against the Trojans. Patroclus was slain by Hector. Achilles then, in order to avenge the death of Patroclus, returned to the conflict, defeated the Trojans and slew Hector in the fight.

till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of the right fore-leg, leaving the foe to
⁵ select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame.

I took up the chip on which the three were struggling,
¹⁰ carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near fore-leg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler,
¹⁵ his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breast-plate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They
²⁰ struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddle-bow, still apparently as firmly
²⁵ fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised
³⁰ the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hotel des Invalides,¹ I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter.
³⁵ I never learned which party was victorious, nor the

¹ **Hotel des Invalides**—A great establishment founded in Paris in 1670 for disabled and infirm soldiers.

cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessin the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

In the fall the loon came, as usual, to moult and⁵ bathe in the pond, making the woods ring with his wild laughter before I had risen. At rumour of his arrival all the Milldam sportsmen are on the alert, in gigs and on foot, two by two and three by three, with patent rifles and conical balls and spy-glasses.¹⁰ They come rustling through the woods like autumn leaves, at least ten men to one loon. Some station themselves on this side of the pond, some on that, for the poor bird cannot be omnipresent; if he dive here he must come up there. But now the kind October¹⁵ wind rises, rustling the leaves and rippling the surface of the water, so that no loon can be heard or seen, though his foes sweep the pond with spy-glasses, and make the woods resound with their discharges. The waves generously rise and dash angrily, taking sides²⁰ with all waterfowl, and our sportsmen must beat a retreat to town and shop and unfinished jobs. But they were too often successful. When I went to get a pail of water early in the morning I frequently saw this stately bird sailing out of my cove within a few²⁵ rods. If I endeavoured to overtake him in a boat, in order to see how he would manœuvre, he would dive and be completely lost, so that I did not discover him again, sometimes, till the latter part of the day. But I was more than a match for him on the surface. He³⁰ commonly went off in a rain.

As I was paddling along the north shore one very calm October afternoon, for such days especially they settle on to the lakes, like the milkweed down, having looked in vain over the pond for a loon, suddenly one,³⁵ sailing out from the shore towards the middle a few rods in front of me, set up his wild laugh and betrayed

himself. I pursued with a paddle and he dived, but when he came up I was nearer than before. He dived again, but I miscalculated the direction he would take, and we were fifty rods apart when he came to the surface this time, for I had helped to widen the interval; and again he laughed loud and long, and with more reason than before. He manœuvred so cunningly that I could not get within half a dozen rods of him. Each time, when he came to the surface, turning his head this way and that, he coolly surveyed the water and the land, and apparently chose his course so that he might come up where there was the widest expanse of water and at the greatest distance from the boat. It was surprising how quickly he made up his mind and put his resolve into execution. He led me at once to the widest part of the pond, and could not be driven from it. While he was thinking one thing in his brain, I was endeavouring to divine his thought in mine. It was a pretty game, played on the smooth surface of the pond, a man against a loon. Suddenly your adversary's checker disappears beneath the board, and the problem is to place yours nearest to where his will appear again. Sometimes he would come up unexpectedly on the opposite side of me, having apparently passed directly under the boat. So long-winded was he and so unwearable, that when he had swum farthest he would immediately plunge again, nevertheless; and then no wit could divine where in the deep pond, beneath the smooth surface, he might be speeding his way like a fish, for he had time and ability to visit the bottom of the pond in its deepest part. It is said that loons have been caught in the New York lakes eighty feet beneath the surface, with hooks set for trout,—though Walden is deeper than that. How surprised must the fishes be to see this ungainly visitor from another sphere speeding his way amid their schools! Yet he appeared to know his course as surely under

water as on the surface, and swam much faster there. Once or twice I saw a ripple where he approached the surface, just put his head out to reconnoitre, and instantly dived again. I found that it was as well for me to rest on my oars and wait his reappearing as⁵ to endeavour to calculate where he would rise; for again and again, when I was straining my eyes over the surface one way, I would suddenly be startled by his unearthly laugh behind me. But why, after displaying so much cunning, did he invariably betray himself¹⁰ the moment he came up by that loud laugh? Did not his white breast enough betray him? He was indeed a silly loon, I thought. I could commonly hear the splash of the water when he came up, and so also detected him. But after an hour he seemed as fresh¹⁵ as ever, dived as willingly and swam yet farther than at first. It was surprising to see how serenely he sailed off with unruffled breast when he came to the surface, doing all the work with his webbed feet beneath. His usual note was this demoniac laughter, yet somewhat²⁰ like that of a water-fowl; but occasionally, when he had balked me most successfully and come up a long way off, he uttered a long-drawn unearthly howl, probably more like that of a wolf than any bird; as when a beast puts his muzzle to the ground and deliber-²⁵ately howls. This was his looning,—perhaps the wildest sound that is ever heard here, making the woods ring far and wide. I concluded that he laughed in derision of my efforts, confident of his own resources. Though the sky was by this time overcast, the pond³⁰ was so smooth that I could see where he broke the surface when I did not hear him. His white breast, the stillness of the air, and the smoothness of the water were all against him. At length, having come up fifty rods off, he uttered one of those prolonged howls, as³⁵ if calling on the god of loons to aid him, and immediately there came a wind from the east and rippled the

surface, and filled the whole air with misty rain, and I was impressed as if it were the prayer of the loon answered, and his god was angry with me; and so I left him disappearing far away on the tumultuous surface.

—HENRY D. THOREAU [1817-1862].

THE ESCAPE OF ROB ROY

From *Rob Roy*¹

THE echoes of the rocks and ravines on either side now rang to the trumpets of the cavalry, which, forming themselves into two distinct bodies, began to move down the valley at a slow trot. That commanded by
15 Major Galbraith soon took to the right and crossed the Forth, for the purpose of taking up the quarters assigned them for the night, when they were to occupy, as I understood, an old castle in the vicinity. They formed a lively object while crossing the stream, but were
20 soon lost in winding up the bank on the opposite side, which was clothed with wood.

We continued our march with considerable good order. To ensure the safe custody of the prisoner, the Duke² had caused him to be placed on horseback behind
25 one of his retainers, called, as I was informed, Ewan of Brigglands, one of the largest and strongest men who were present. A horse-belt, passed round the bodies of both and buckled before the yeoman's breast, rendered it impossible for Rob Roy to free himself from his
30 keeper. I was directed to keep close beside them,

¹ **Rob Roy** deals with certain incidents connected with the life of Rob Roy MacGregor, a notorious Highland outlaw, who was concerned in the rebellion of 1715, and who died about 1733. The adventure described in the following passage is believed to have been founded on actual fact.

² **the Duke**—The Duke of Montrose, with whom for some years Rob Roy was at constant war.

and accommodated for the purpose with a troop-horse. We were as closely surrounded by the soldiers as the width of the road would permit, and had always at least one, if not two, on each side with pistol in hand. Andrew Fairservice,¹ furnished with a Highland pony of ⁵ which they had made prey somewhere or other, was permitted to ride among the other domestics, of whom a great number attended the line of march, though without falling into the ranks of the more regularly ¹⁰ trained troopers.

In this manner we travelled for a certain distance, until we arrived at a place where we also were to cross the river. The Forth, as being the outlet of a lake, is of considerable depth, even where less important in ¹⁵ point of width, and the descent to the ford was by a broken precipitous ravine, which only permitted one horseman to descend at once. The rear and centre of our small body halting on the bank, while the front files passed down in succession, produced a considerable ²⁰ delay, as is usual on such occasions, and even some confusion; for a number of those riders who made no proper part of the squadron crowded to the ford without regularity, and made the militia cavalry, although tolerably well drilled, partake in some degree of their ²⁵ own disorder.

It was while we were thus huddled together on the bank that I heard Rob Roy whisper to the man behind whom he was placed on horseback, "Your father, Ewan, wadna hae carried an auld friend to the shambles,² ³⁰ like a calf, for a' the dukes in Christendom."

Ewan returned no answer, but shrugged, as one who would express by that sign that what he was doing was none of his own choice.

"And when the MacGregors come down the glen,

¹ **Andrew Fairservice**—The servant of Francis Osbaldistone, who is telling the story.

² **shambles**—Butchers' stalls; a place of slaughter.

and ye see toom faulds,¹ a bluidy hearthstane and the fire flashing out between the rafters o' your house, ye may be thinking then, Ewan, that were your friend Rob to the fore, you would have had that safe which
⁵ it will make your heart sair to lose."

Ewan of Brigglands again shrugged and groaned, but remained silent.

"It's a sair thing," continued Rob, sliding his insinuations so gently into Ewan's ear that they reached no
¹⁰ other but mine, who certainly saw myself in no shape called upon to destroy his prospects of escape—"it's a sair thing that Ewan of Brigglands, whom Roy MacGregor has helped with hand, sword and purse, suld mind a gloom² from a great man mair than a friend's
¹⁵ life."

Ewan seemed sorely agitated, but was silent. We heard the Duke's voice from the opposite bank call, "Bring over the prisoner."

Ewan put his horse in motion, and just as I heard
²⁰ Roy say, "Never weigh a MacGregor's bluid against a broken whang o' leather,³ for there will be another accounting to gie for it baith here and hereafter," they passed me hastily, and, dashing forward rather precipitately, entered the water.

²⁵ "Not yet, sir—not yet," said some of the troopers to me, as I was about to follow, while others pressed forward into the stream.

I saw the Duke on the other side, by the waning light, engaged in commanding his people to get into order,
³⁰ as they landed dispersedly, some higher, some lower. Many had crossed, some were in the water, and the rest were preparing to follow, when a sudden splash warned me that MacGregor's eloquence had prevailed on Ewan

¹ toom faulds—Empty sheepfolds.

² gloom—A frown.

³ a broken whang o' leather—Referring to the leather belt which bound him. Whang, a thong or strip.

to give him freedom and a chance for life. The Duke also heard the sound, and instantly guessed its meaning. "Dog!" he exclaimed to Ewan as he landed, "where is your prisoner?" and, without waiting to hear the apology which the terrified vassal began to falter forth,⁵ he fired a pistol at his head, whether fatally I know not, and exclaimed, "Gentlemen, disperse and pursue the villain. An hundred guineas for him that secures Rob Roy!"

All became an instant scene of the most lively confusion.¹⁰ Rob Roy, disengaged from his bonds, doubtless by Ewan's slipping the buckle of his belt, had dropped off at the horse's tail, and instantly dived, passing under the belly of the troop-horse which was on his left hand. But as he was obliged to come to the surface¹⁵ an instant for air, the glimpse of his tartan plaid drew the attention of the troopers, some of whom plunged into the river with a total disregard to their own safety, rushing, according to the expression of their country, through pool and stream, sometimes swimming²⁰ their horses, sometimes losing them and struggling for their own lives. Others less zealous, or more prudent, broke off in different directions and galloped up and down the banks, to watch the places at which the fugitive might possibly land. The hallooing, the whoop-²⁵ing, the calls for aid at different points, where they saw, or conceived they saw, some vestige of him they were seeking; the frequent report of pistols and carbines,¹ fired at every object which excited the least suspicion; the sight of so many horsemen riding about³⁰ in and out of the river, and striking with their long broadswords at whatever excited their attention, joined to the vain exertions used by their officers to restore order and regularity; and all this in so wild a scene, and visible only by the imperfect twilight of an³⁵ autumn evening made the most extraordinary hubbub

¹Carabine—A short, light musket.

I had hitherto witnessed. I was indeed left alone to observe it, for our whole cavalcade had dispersed in pursuit, or at least to see the event of the search. Indeed, as I partly suspected at the time, and afterwards⁵ learned with certainty, many of those who seemed most active in their attempts to waylay and recover the fugitive, were in actual truth, least desirous that he should be taken, and only joined in the cry to increase the general confusion, and to give Rob Roy a better opportunity of escaping.¹⁰

Escape, indeed, was not difficult for a swimmer so expert as the freebooter, as soon as he had eluded the first burst of pursuit. At one time he was closely pressed, and several blows were made which flashed¹⁵ in the water around him; the scene much resembling one of the otter-hunts which I had seen at the Hall, where the animal is detected by the hounds from his being necessitated to put his nose above the stream to vent or breathe, while he is enabled to elude them by²⁰ getting under water again so soon as he has refreshed himself by respiration. MacGregor, however, had a trick beyond the otter; for he contrived, when very closely pursued, to disengage himself unobserved from his plaid, and suffer it to float down the stream, where²⁵ in its progress it quickly attracted general attention; many of the horsemen were thus put upon a false scent, and several shots or stabs were averted from the party for whom they were designed.

Once fairly out of view, the recovery of the prisoner³⁰ became almost impossible, since in so many places the river was rendered inaccessible by the steepness of its banks, or the thickness of alders, poplars, and birch, which, overhanging its banks, prevented the approach of horsemen. Errors and accidents had also happened³⁵ among the pursuers, whose task the approaching night rendered every moment more hopeless. Some got themselves involved in the eddies of the stream, and

required the assistance of their companions to save them from drowning. Others, hurt by shots or blows in the confused *mêlée*, implored help or threatened vengeance, and in one or two instances such accidents led to actual strife. The trumpets, therefore, sounded⁵ the retreat, announcing that the commanding officer, with whatsoever unwillingness, had for the present relinquished hopes of the important prize which had thus unexpectedly escaped his grasp, and the troopers began slowly, reluctantly, and brawling with each¹⁰ other as they returned, again to assume their ranks. I could see them darkening as they formed on the southern bank of the river, whose murmurs, long drowned by the louder cries of vengeful pursuit, were now heard hoarsely mingling with the deep, discontented, and¹⁵ reproachful voices of the disappointed horsemen.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT, [1771-1822].

THE FUNERAL OF GORDON

*From With Kitchener to Khartum*¹

The steamers—screws, paddles, stern-wheelers—plug-plugged their steady way up the full Nile. Past

¹In 1879 at the request of the Khedive, England and France undertook to control the finances of Egypt, which was threatened with national bankruptcy. This Anglo-French interference was the signal for a rebellion, led by Arabi Pasha, the Egyptian minister of finance. The rebels were, however, finally defeated by Lord Wolseley at Tel-el-Kebir in 1882. In order to safeguard her interests in the Suez Canal England now undertook a military protectorate of Egypt, and in consequence became involved in fresh difficulties. In 1883 a Mohammedan leader appeared in the Soudan, proclaiming himself El Mahdi, the Mohammedan Messiah. He was generally victorious, and in a short time the Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan were threatened. General Gordon was sent by the British government to effect the withdrawal of these troops, but in the meantime the Egyptian army under Hicks Pasha was cut to pieces and Gordon was besieged in

the northern fringe of Omdurman where the sheikh¹ came out with the white flag,² past the breach where we went in to the Khalifa's³ stronghold, past the choked embrasures⁴ and the lacerated Mahdi's⁵ tomb, past the swamp-rooted palms of Tuti Island.⁶ We looked at it all with a dispassionate, impersonal curiosity. It was Sunday morning, and that furious Friday seemed already half a lifetime behind us. The volleys had dwindled out of our ears, and the smoke out of our¹⁰ nostrils, and to-day we were going to the funeral of

Khartum. The next year an English force under Wolseley was sent to his relief, but after fighting their way to Khartum they found that the stronghold was in the hands of the Mahdi, and that Gordon had been killed but two days previously. The result of this failure was the withdrawal of the Anglo-Egyptian forces from lower Egypt. The next twelve years were years of preparation for a final reconquest of the Soudan. In 1897, Lord Kitchener, then the Sirdar or Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-Egyptian army, began the final southward march, constructing a railway as he went along in order to safeguard his communications. After several engagements he finally reached Omdurman, which lies across the river from Khartum. Here a great battle was fought on Friday, Sept. 2nd, 1898, against the forces of the Khalifa, the leader of the Soudanese. The Khalifa was defeated and Omdurman was occupied the same day. On the following Sunday a detachment of English officers and soldiers proceeded down the river to Khartum, now in ruins, where the ceremony described in our passage took place.

¹ **sheikh**—A Mohammedan patriarch.

² **white flag**—After the battle, when the English troops approached Omdurman, a sheikh had come out with a white flag, to ask for terms.

³ **Khalifa or Caliph**—The spiritual and civil head of a Mohammedan state.

⁴ **embrasures**—Openings in the wall, through which guns are fired.

⁵ **Mahdi**—The Mohammed Ahmed, who styled himself El Mahdi, the expected one, the Messiah. He died in Omdurman in 1885.

⁶ **Tuti Island**—In the river Nile between Omdurman and Khartum.

Gordon.¹ After nearly fourteen years the Christian soldier was to have Christian burial.

On the steamers there was a detachment of every corps, white or black or yellow, that had taken part in the vengeance. Every white officer that could be spared⁵ from duty was there, fifty men picked from each British battalion, one or two from each unit of the Egyptian army. That we were going up to Khartum at all was evidence of our triumph; yet, if you looked about you, triumph was not the note. The most¹⁰ reckless subaltern, the most barbarous black, was touched with gravity. We were going to perform a necessary duty, which had been put off far, far too long.

Fourteen years next January—yet even through¹⁵ that humiliating thought there ran a whisper of triumph. We may be slow; but in that very slowness we show that we do not forget. Soon or late, we give our own their due. Here were men that fought for Gordon's life while he lived,—Kitchener, who went²⁰ disguised and alone among furious enemies to get news of him; Wauchope,² who poured out his blood like water at Tamai and Kirbekan; Stuart-Wortley,² who missed by but two days the chance of dying at Gordon's side. And here, too, were boys who could hardly²⁵

¹ **Gordon**—Chinese Gordon, or Gordon Pasha (1833-1885) had served for many years in China and in various parts of Africa. He was besieged in Khartum by the Mahdi, March 12th, 1884, and was killed in the storming of the city, Jan. 26th, 1885.

² **Wauchope**. . . **Kirbekan**—Wauchope belonged to the Black Watch, a famous Highland regiment. The Black Watch took part in the engagement at Tamai, near Suakim, March, 1884, and in the fight at Kirbekan, February, 1885, which occurred in the course of Lord Wolseley's relief expedition up the Nile. Wauchope was killed in the battle of Magersfontein, in the South African War.

³ **Stuart-Wortley**—He was a member of the detachment which was sent to the relief of Gordon, January 1885, but which reached Khartum two days after the city had fallen.

lisp when their mothers told them that Gordon was dead, grown up now and appearing in the fulness of time to exact eleven thousand lives for one. Gordon may die—other Gordons may die in the future—but
 5 the same clean-limbed brood will grow up and avenge them.

The boats stopped plugging and there was silence. We were tying up opposite a grove of tall palms; on the bank was a crowd of natives curiously like the
 10 backsheesh-hunters¹ who gather to greet the Nile steamers. They stared at us; but we looked beyond them to a large building rising from a crumbling quay. You could see that it had once been a handsome edifice of the type you know in Cairo or Alexandria—all stone
 15 and stucco,² two-storied, faced with tall regular windows. Now the upper storey was clean gone; the blind windows were filled up with bricks; the stucco was all scars, and you could walk up to the roof on rubble.³ In front was an acacia, such as grow in Ismailia⁴ or
 20 the Gezireh⁵ at Cairo, only unpruned—deep luscious green, only drooping like a weeping willow. At that most ordinary sight everybody grew very solemn. For it was a piece of a new world, or rather of an old world, utterly different from the squalid mud, the baking
 25 barrenness of Omdurman. A façade⁶ with tall windows, a tree with green leaves—the façade battered and blind, the tree drooping to earth—there was no need to tell us we were at a grave. In that forlorn ruin, and that disconsolate acacia, the bones of murdered civilisation
 30 lay before us.

¹ **backsheesh-hunters**—Beggars looking for tips or gratuities.

² **stucco**—A fine plaster used for the external ornamentation of buildings.

³ **rubble**—Rough pieces of plaster.

⁴ **Ismailia**—A small town on the Isthmus of Suez.

⁵ **Gezireh**—A palace at Cairo.

⁶ **façade**—The exterior face of a building.

The troops formed up before the palace in three sides of a rectangle—Egyptians to our left as we looked from the river, British to the right. The Sirdar,¹ the generals of division and brigade, and the staff stood in the open space facing the palace. Then on the roof—⁵ almost on the very spot where Gordon fell, though the steps by which the butchers mounted have long since vanished—we were aware of two flagstaves. By the right-hand halliards² stood Lieutenant Staveley, R.N.,³ and Captain Watson, K.R.R.⁴; by the left-hand¹⁰ Bimbashi Mitford and his Excellency's Egyptian A.D.C.⁵

The Sirdar raised his hand. A pull on the halliards: up ran, out flew the Union Jack, tugging eagerly at his reins, dazzling gloriously in the sun, rejoicing in his strength and his freedom. "Bang!" went the¹⁵ "Melik's"⁶ 12½-pounder, and the boat quivered to her backbone. "God Save our Gracious Queen" hymned the Guards' band—"bang!"—from the "Melik"—and Sirdar and private stood stiff—"bang!"—to²⁰ attention, every hand at the helmet peak in—"bang!"—salute. The Egyptian flag had gone up at the same instant; and now, the same ear-smashing, soul-uplifting bangs marking time, the band of the 11th Sudanese was playing the Khedivial⁷ hymn. "Three cheers for the Queen!" cried the Sirdar: helmets leaped in the²⁵ air, and the melancholy ruins woke to the first wholesome shout of all these years. Then the same for the Khedive. The comrade flags stretched themselves

¹ **Sirdar**—General Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief, appointed Sirdar in 1890.

² **halliards**—The ropes used for hoisting flags or sails.

³ **R.N.**—Royal Navy.

⁴ **K.R.R.**—King's Royal Rifles.

⁵ **A.D.C.**—Aide-de-camp.

⁶ **Melik**—One of the gun boats.

⁷ **Khedive**—The viceroy of Egypt, a title granted by the Sultan in 1867.

lustily, enjoying their own again; the bands pealed forth the pride of country; the twenty-one guns banged forth the strength of war. Thus, white man and black, Christian and Moslem,¹ Anglo-Egypt set
⁵ her seal once more, for ever, on Khartum.

Before we had time to think such thoughts over to ourselves, the Guards were playing the Dead March in "Saul."² Then the black band was playing the march from Handel's "Scipio," which in England generally
¹⁰ goes with "Toll for the Brave;" this was in memory of those loyal men among the Khedive's subjects who could have saved themselves by treachery, but preferred to die with Gordon. Next fell a deeper hush than ever, except for the solemn minute guns that had
¹⁵ followed the fierce salute. Four chaplains—Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist—came slowly forward and ranged themselves, with their backs to the palace, just before the Sirdar. The Presbyterian read the Fifteenth Psalm. The Anglican led the rust-
²⁰ ling whisper of the Lord's Prayer. Snow-haired Father Brindle, best beloved of priests, laid his helmet at his feet, and read a memorial prayer bareheaded in the sun. Then came forward the pipers and wailed a dirge, and the Sudanese played "Abide with Me." Perhaps
²⁵ lips did twitch just a little to see the ebony heathens fervently blowing out Gordon's favourite hymn; but the most irresistible incongruity would hardly have made us laugh at that moment. And there were those who said the cold Sirdar himself could hardly
³⁰ speak or see, as General Hunter³ and the rest stepped out according to their rank and shook his hand. What

¹ **Moslem**—Mohammedan.

² **Dead March in "Saul"**—"Saul" was an oratorio composed by Handel (1685-1759), a German composer who spent a great part of his life in London.

³ **General Hunter**—Major-General Archibald Hunter, who served for many years in Egypt, and afterwards took part in the South African War.

wonder? He has trodden this road to Khartum for fourteen years, and he stood at the goal at last.

Thus with Maxim-Nordenfeldt¹ and Bible we buried Gordon after the manner of his race. The parade was over, the troops were dismissed, and for a short⁵ space we walked in Gordon's garden. Gordon has become a legend with his countrymen, and they all but deify him dead who would never have heard of him had he lived. But in this garden you somehow came to know Gordon the man, not the myth, and to¹⁰ feel near to him. Here was an Englishman doing his duty, alone and at the instant peril of his life; yet still he loved his garden. The garden was a yet more pathetic ruin than the palace. The palace accepted its doom mutely; the garden strove against it. Un-¹⁵trimmed, unwatered, the oranges and citrons still struggled to bear their little, hard, green knobs, as if they had been full ripe fruit. The pomegranates put out their vermilion star-flowers, but the fruit was small and woody and juiceless. The figs bore better,²⁰ but they, too, were small and without vigour. Rankly overgrown with dhurra,² a vine still trailed over a low roof its pale leaves and limp tendrils, but yielded not a sign of grapes. It was all green, and so far vivid and refreshing after Omdurman. But it was the green²⁵ of nature, not of cultivation: leaves grew large and fruit grew small, and dwindled away. Reluctantly, despairingly, Gordon's garden was dropping back to wilderness. And in the middle of the defeated fruit trees grows rankly the hateful Sodom apple,³ the poison-³⁰ous herald of desolation.

The bugle broke in upon us; we went back to the boats. We were quicker steaming back than steaming

¹ **Maxim-Nordenfeldt**—A machine gun.

² **dhurra**—A coarse grass.

³ **Sodom apple**—Gall-nuts produced by an insect called *cynips insana*. These so-called "apples" are beautiful externally, but are filled with ashes.

up. We were not a whit less chastened, but every man felt lighter. We came with a sigh of shame: we went away with a sigh of relief. The long-delayed duty was done. The bones of our countrymen were⁵ shattered and scattered abroad, and no man knows their place; none the less Gordon had his due burial at last. So we steamed away to the roaring camp and left him alone again. Yet not one nor two looked back at the mouldering palace and the tangled garden¹⁰ with a new and a great contentment. We left Gordon alone—but alone in majesty under the conquering ensign of his own people.

GEORGE WARRINGTON STEEVENS [1870-1900].

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